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PHYSICALLY AND  
MORALLY CONSIDERED.

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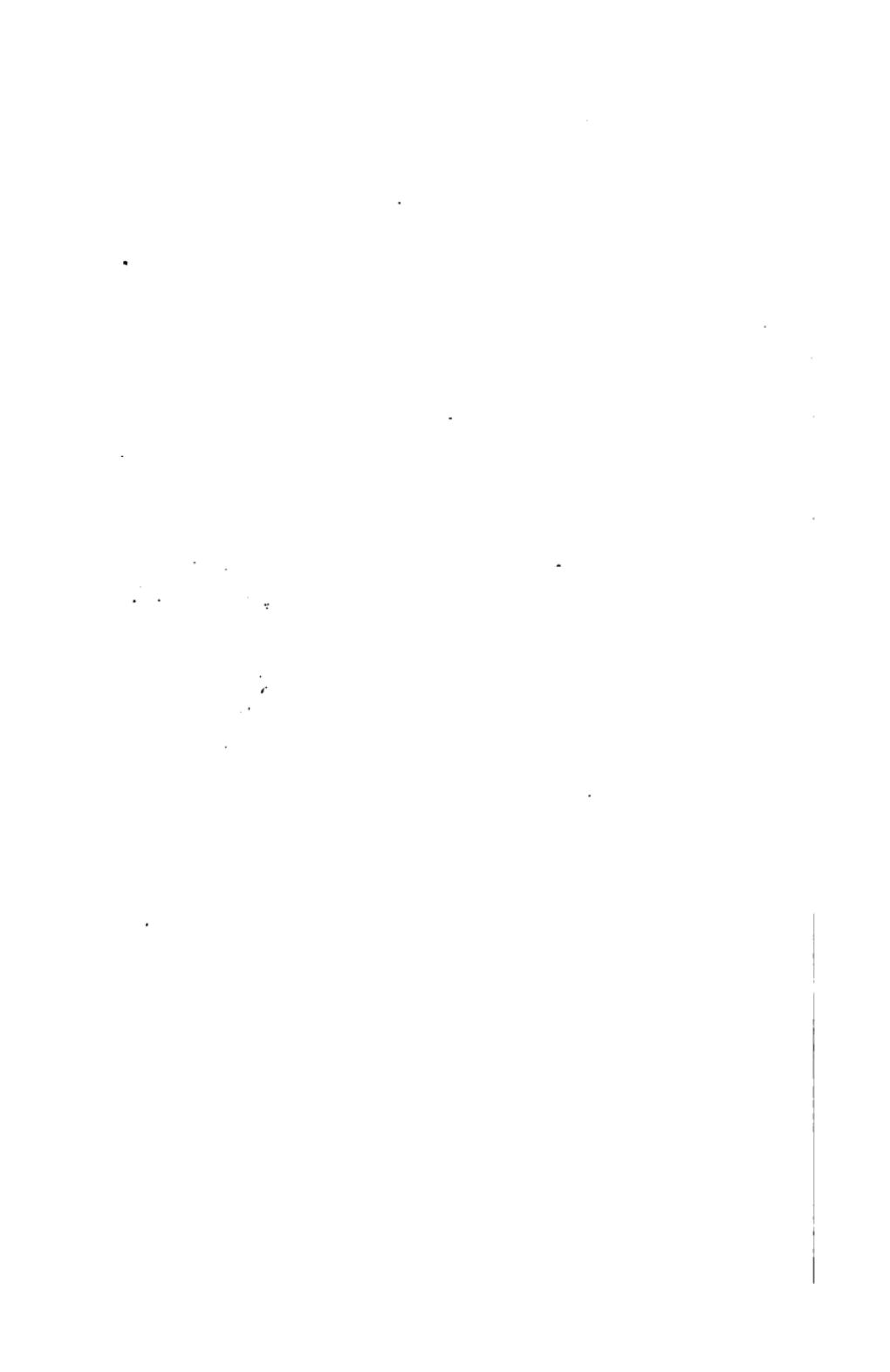
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# HEAVEN

PHYSICALLY AND MORALLY CONSIDERED:

OR,

AN INQUIRY

INTO THE NATURE, LOCALITY, AND BLESSEDNESS

OF THE

## *Heavenly World.*

BY JOSEPH ROBERTS.



"The wise man, said the Bible, walks with God;  
Surveys, far on, the endless line of life;  
Values his soul, thinks of eternity,  
Both worlds considers, and provides for both;  
With reason's eye his passions guards; abstains  
From evil; lives on hope, on hope the fruit  
Of faith; looks upward, purifies his soul,  
Expands his wings, and mounts into the sky;  
Passes the sun, and gains his Father's house,  
And drinks with angels from the fount of bliss."

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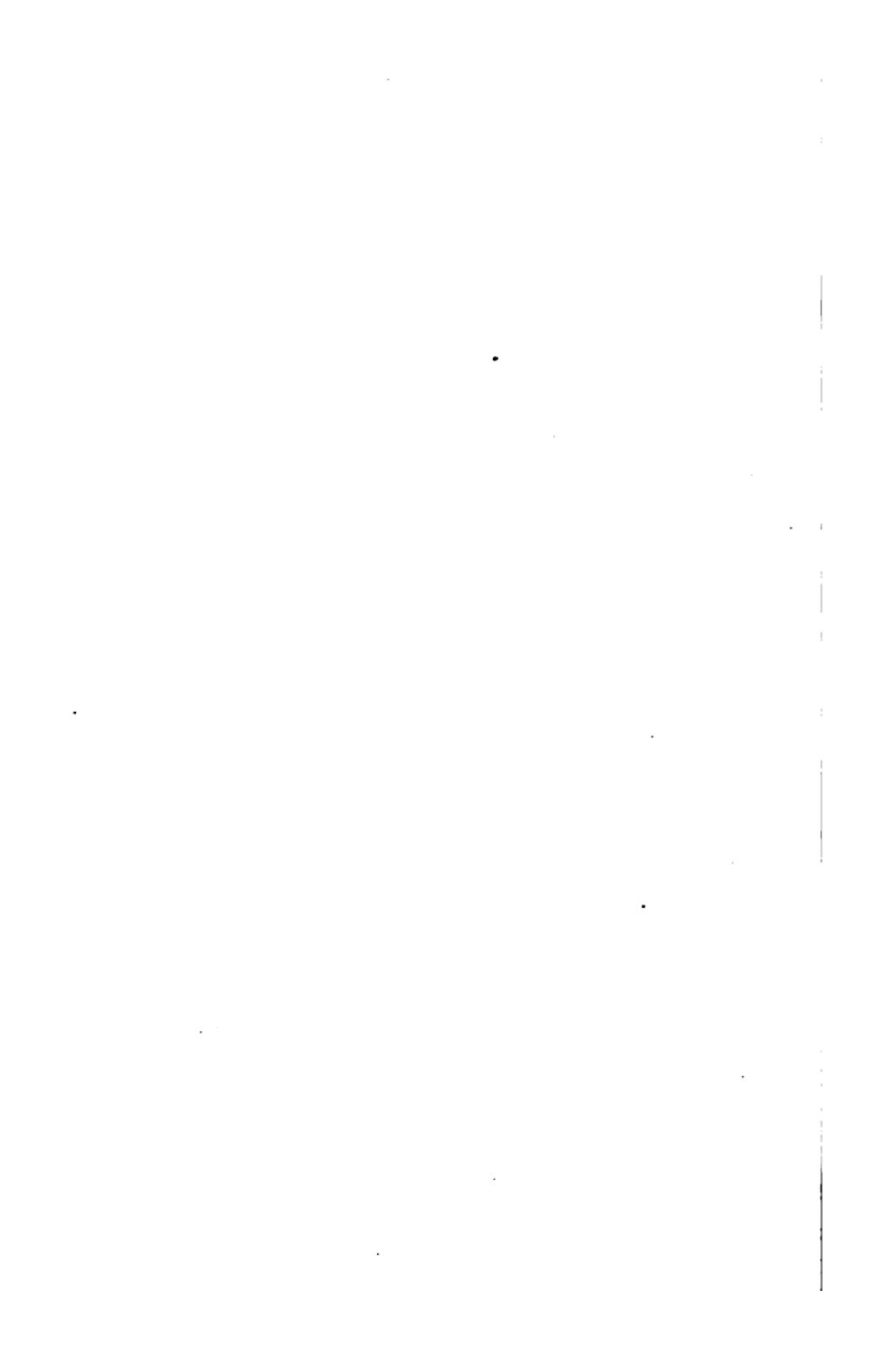
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TO THE  
MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION  
RECENTLY FORMED, AND ASSEMBLING FOR DIVINE WORSHIP  
IN THE  
BAPTIST CHAPEL, CHESTERTON;  
TO THE ZEALOUS AND PERSEVERING TEACHERS OF THE SABBATH-  
SCHOOL CONNECTED THEREWITH,  
WHOSE EXERTIONS HAVE, UNDER GOD, BEEN MAINLY INSTRUMENTAL IN  
ORIGINATING AND SUSTAINING THE INFANT CAUSE;  
AND  
TO THOSE CHRISTIAN FRIENDS  
WHO HAVE, IN VARIOUS WAYS, MANIFESTED THEIR SYMPATHY WITH  
THE WRITER DURING HIS PAINFUL AND PROTRACTED  
AFFLICTION,  
*This little Production*  
IS RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED  
BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE PASTOR  
AND OBLIGED AND FAITHFUL FRIEND,  
THE AUTHOR.



## PREFACE.

SOME apology may reasonably be expected for the obtrusion, by a young and obscure Minister, of his particular opinions upon public notice. His apology is this, that he has himself felt the need of a work on Heaven, embracing within a reasonable compass a consideration of the various branches of the subject treated in this volume; and is aware that many others have been unable to content themselves with the partial view of the subject to which their attention has been confined. The Author regards it as a happy circumstance that, two or three years since, he was compelled to fix his thoughts upon this matter. The materials of which the following work is composed were in part collected then. As now presented in the following pages, it is the result of the Author's exertions whilst recovering from an illness of long continuance, which prevented his attention to ordinary duties. He now commits it to the press (encouraged by a numerous and respectable body of Subscribers) in the hope that, under the Divine blessing, it may prove

useful, by affording some degree of light and comfort to those who are sitting in darkness, or who, with weary steps, are pursuing their pilgrimage to the New Jerusalem. The Author hopes that, whatever may be thought of the particular hypothesis he has laid down, he shall not be charged with presumption, or an impertinent meddling with things which still form part of the mysteries of the kingdom; and may add, that the moment any position he has assumed is seen to be opposed to philosophical fact or Scriptural representation, it will be abandoned. It has been his aim throughout, to throw an air of reality about the subject, so that it may be brought within the range of the contemplations of ordinary minds. He concludes this Preface with the following observations from the “Physical Theory of another Life,” expressing his full concurrence in them, and regretting that this book did not fall into his hands until the greater part of the following work had been completed, and notice had been given of its publication.

“ What is to be guarded against, as well in respect to the sanctity of religion, as in deference to the principles of good sense and sound philosophy, is, in the first place, the indulgence of the imagination; for it is not from that quarter we can expect any aid. And, in the second place, the supposition that any hypothesis formed on a subject of this kind, how plausible soever it may seem,

is, or can be, more than a rational conjecture; or that it can rightfully have any force in disturbing our religious convictions. On the path we are about to pursue, no practical evil will arise so long as we carefully abstain from the error of confounding the deductions of reason with the testimony of the inspired writers, nor ever allow any part of the authority, or the serious and sacred import that attach to the latter, to be extended to the former. At the impulse of a 'fleshy mind,' to intrude into 'things not seen,' is a grave fault, and especially so, if, on the strength of even the most reasonable theory, we are led to bring into question a particle of that which the text of Scripture, duly interpreted, requires us to believe.

" Yet there is a path (as the Author thinks) which runs clear of both the errors above mentioned; and in following it, as we propose to do, we shall at once discard the gay dreams of the fancy, fraught with the images of earth, and hold every thing light which countervails, or which will not readily consist with, the sure words of Christ and his Apostles. Our conjectures are conjectures merely; or even if, in any instance, they might challenge a higher value, or whatever may be their solidity, they are, at the best, matters of science, not of piety; nor is our faith in any way obliged by them'; nor can our Christianity be implicated in the

remotest manner in the establishment or in the refutation of any such speculations. Let them be confirmed, or let them be confuted ; still, as expectants of that ‘life and immortality’ which is brought to light by the Gospel, we look on with no solicitude while reason attempts the arduous path that is open to her efforts.

“ It is very true that Christianity has suffered damage by vain and presumptuous intrusions into its mysteries ; but it may also be injured, and perhaps in a more fatal although more silent manner, by a cold withdrawal of all attention and all curiosity from the high themes of meditation which it involves. In fact, this is the very danger to which our religion is now exposed ; nor is a too eager regard to things unseen by any means the fault of our times. There may then be a seasonableness in the endeavour to engage attention upon the tranquil but vivifying anticipation of another life ; and it is always true that a distinct and familiar conception of it must aid us, as well in resisting the deductions of the present life, as in sustaining its pains and sorrows ; nor does all the help we can obtain of this kind always prove enough to ensure a due repose of mind amid the agitating alternations of hope and fear that may attend our path.”

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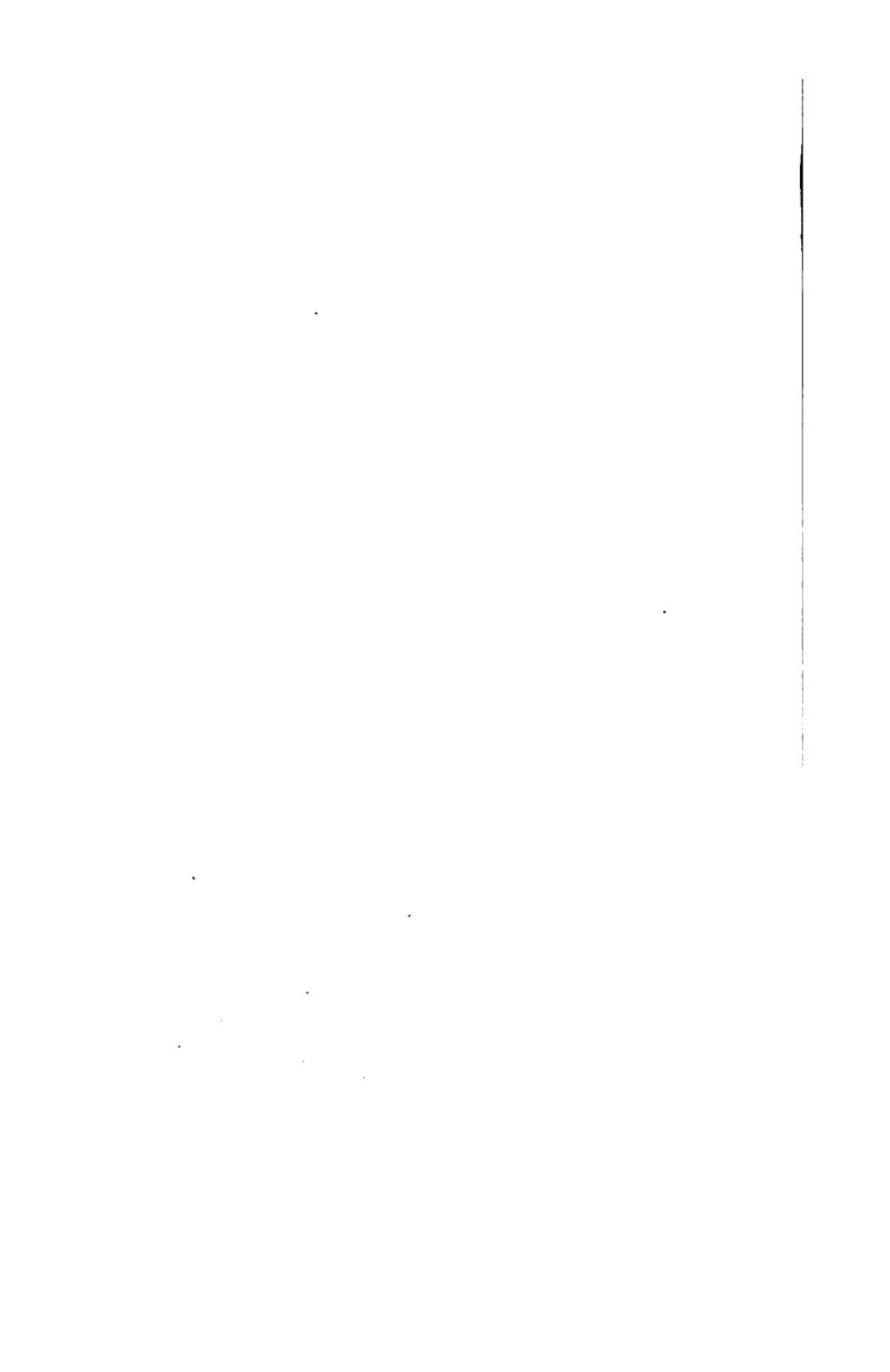
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## INTRODUCTION

### *The Doctrine of a Future State.*

MAN is an immortal being. He is endowed with capabilities of reflection, with powers of investigation, and with facilities for action, which not only elevate him to a far higher position than the sentient orders of creation by which he is surrounded; but, together with his earnest longings after continued existence, his hopes and fears as to futurity, as well as his almost unbounded capacity of intellectual and moral improvement, seem to indicate his destiny to a nobler state hereafter than that in which he is placed in the present world. It might reasonably be supposed, previous to any express revelation on the subject, that he was never destined by his all-wise Maker to a mere ephemeral existence, allowing little oppor-

tunity for the exercise of such capabilities, and shrouding in endless night those hopes which seem to be deeply implanted in his very nature. The mind recoils at once from the idea that man is formed only for the present world, as involving in it something alike derogatory to the wisdom and goodness of the ever-blessed Creator, and the dignity and happiness of those whom He has thus constituted. Accordingly we find that the doctrine of a future state has been recognized by men in every age and in every country of the world, by men in almost every variety of external circumstance and condition as to intellectual endowment; by poets, philosophers, and teachers of religion, and also by some of the most savage and uncultivated tribes of the human family.

The doctrine, therefore, is in accordance with the common sense of mankind,—a fact which furnishes strong presumptive evidence of its truth.

With the expectation of a future state, the idea that it will be one of retribution has been generally entertained: here has been opened up a wide field for speculations, which have left, however, the most virtuous and refined of those who have indulged in them, in painful uncertainty with regard to this most interesting of all inquiries.

Pagan philosophers have devoted their assiduous attention to this subject. They have expended their very last energies in endeavouring to unravel its

profound mysteries—but they have failed. Trusting to the feeble light of nature and their own unassisted powers, “they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened ; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.”<sup>1</sup>

Reason having been unsuccessful, fancy has been sent forth on the fruitless enterprise. She has penetrated the mantling vail which hides from mortal ken the regions of obscurity beyond the grave. She has explored with restless and eager wing its dark and chaotic realms, but has returned speedily and unsatisfied—unblest herself and impotent to bless. She brings no olive branch to cheer the anxious spirit of man, whilst tossed on the angry billows of this life’s tempestuous sea, with the tidings that there yet awaits him a region of serenity and peace, no ripened and delicious cluster to testify as to the plenty that there abounds. She tells of no ray of hope which, darting across the distant horizon, irradiates a land of promise, nor directs to one solitary spot on which the soles of their weary feet may stand who are daily in this life the disappointed candidates for rest and joy. She tells the anxious enquirer after immortality of nothing better than a sensual paradise or an eternal sleep.

Whilst, however, nature is thus silent, reason

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 21, 22.

dark and impotent, and the imagination vain, revelation is full of light and hope. "Our Saviour Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."<sup>2</sup> We have here a sure word of prophecy; whereunto we do well that we take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place. Here we are taught that although "it is appointed unto men once to die,"<sup>3</sup> death is not the cessation of our being, that the separated spirit still lives, and lives not in a state of sleep or insensibility, but of active consciousness, continuing its existence not with diminished, but with enlarged powers and with keener susceptibilities, emerging out of a state of infancy into manhood, carrying with it the dispositions and habits evinced and cultivated here, concluding its term of education and trial, and entering upon its irrevocable destiny, immediately to commence a work which must engage it for ever—the reaping of the results of what it has sown on earth.

The same truthful and authoritative records assure us, moreover, that this separation of the inner and the outward man shall not last for ever, but that "there shall be a resurrection of the dead both of the just and unjust": and to confirm our faith in this glorious doctrine, the Great Teacher has himself "risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that sleep"; has caused the fact

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. i. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. ix. 27.

of his resurrection to be attested in a manner the most powerful, and caused the knowledge of it, moreover, to be handed down to us on the page of inspired history, accompanied by evidences absolutely incontrovertible. This was a doctrine of which pagan philosophers never dreamed, however strong the probabilities to which they arrived as to the fact of a future state ; and which, when propounded, was regarded by them with derision, as most vain and utopian babbling. With regard to the nature of the resurrection bodies, we shall have occasion to say more hereafter.

After the reunion of soul and body, and not sooner, will the human race receive their full measure of reward or punishment. Then will take place the great and final judgment, and “ every one will receive the things done in the body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” Then the approved enter fully into “ the joy of their Lord,” henceforth as pillars in the temple of their God, to remain in His presence, and “ go no more out”; whilst from that same dread hour the reprobate give themselves up to the endless ravings of despair, under a conviction more strong and terrible than had ever yet flashed across their unhappy minds, that henceforth they are left—left as the victims of their depravity and incorrigible stubbornness, “ utterly to perish in their own corruptions.” Oh, that men were wise, and that in

this their day they would regard their privileges and responsibilities, that in their latter end they might have peace.

In the volume of revelation, then, is opened up before us the future world ; here the ultimate state of the righteous, and the final doom of the wicked, are presented in vivid colours, and in awful contrast to our view ; in contrast not merely with each other, but also with the present state, and with those things which are now the subjects of our daily experience and observation. On the one hand we have *Heaven*, the temple and palace of Jehovah, presented to us as the ultimate abode of the saints, their unfading inheritance, their city, their kingdom, their home ! with all its scenes of light and loveliness, its floods of melody and songs of praise, its ineffable splendours and immortal crowns, its disinterested friendships and unbroken harmony, its unsullied purity and ecstatic joys, its everlasting life, the smiles of Deity and presence of the Lamb. On the other hand *Hell* is exhibited to our notice as the final destination of the wicked, their prison and place of torment, with its darkness, discord, and blasphemy, its brimstone and flames, its raging thirst and undying worm, its sighs, wailings, and tears, its anarchy and desolation, its selfishness and impurity, its shame and remorse, its malignity and despair,—an eternal dwelling with the devil and fallen spirits, beneath the withering frowns and

implacable wrath of an Almighty and righteous God.

Much of the language of Scripture in reference to these states respectively, is doubtless figurative.

- The various metaphors employed must be considered as contributing to the diversified illustration of the same subject, as intended to exhibit the fitness and congruity of the external circumstances and relations of saints and sinners in the future state to their moral condition, and the consequent adaptation of such circumstances to contribute to the happiness of the one class of individuals, and to augment the misery of the other; as intended to aid us in distinguishing with some degree of perspicuity the individual constituent elements of their bliss and woe, in order that, by combining these various elements, we may have as clear a conception as possible of that "exceeding and eternal weight of glory" which will constitute the portion of the saints, and of that terrible disgrace and punishment which will be the endless portion of the ungodly. We must remember, however, that after all our efforts to comprehend the real nature of our ultimate condition, the estimate that we may form of it in the present gross and imperfect state—a state in which objects of sense so continually and deeply impress us—must necessarily be inadequate, and fall infinitely short of what must at length be felt as solemn and eternal realities.

If the views of a future state advanced in these introductory remarks be true, how obviously and deeply is every man concerned in the question “Whither am *I* going?” Reader! this question should be yours. You are going—advancing momentarily—ah, whither? Whilst you read this line time’s mighty train rolls swiftly along, and you are a passenger. At what *terminus* shall you arrive? You are rapidly passing through your present probation to your irrevocable destiny. Say, will you be happy or miserable hereafter? Will you be saved or lost? Will you dwell in heaven, or linger out your existence amid the unceasing agonies of a second death in hell?

If you yet hesitate as regards your portion in futurity, you are not prepared to enter upon an investigation respecting the nature of the heavenly state. Then settle this point at once. Remember that your character must determine your condition. Faith in Christ is necessary to your salvation. “DOST THOU BELIEVE ON THE SON OF GOD?”

If the reader belong to the blind and infatuated few who reject Divine revelation and pretend to disbelieve in a future state, let him close these pages. To such an one we say nothing more.

“Sceptic! whoe’er thou art, who say’st the soul,  
That divine particle which God’s own breath  
Inspired into the mortal mass, shall rest  
Annihilate, till duration has unroll’d

Her never-ending line ; tell, if thou know'st,  
 Why every nation, every clime, though all  
 In laws, in rites, in manners disagree,  
 With one consent expect another world,  
 Where wickedness shall weep ? Why paynim bards  
 Fabled Elysian plains, Tartarean lakes,  
 Styx and Cocytus ? Tell, why Hali's sons  
 Have feign'd a paradise of mirth and love,  
 Banquets and blooming nymphs ? Or rather tell,  
 Why, on the brink of Orellana's stream,  
 Where never science reared her sacred torch,  
 The untutor'd Indian dreams of happier worlds  
 Behind the cloud-topp'd hill ? Why, in each breast  
 Is placed a friendly monitor, that prompts,  
 Informs, directs, encourages, forbids ?  
 Tell, why on unknown evil grief attends ?  
 Or joy, on secret good ? Why conscience acts  
 With tenfold force, when sickness, age, or pain,  
 Stands tottering on the precipice of death ?  
 Or why such horror gnaws the guilty soul  
 Of dying sinners ; while the good man sleeps  
 Peaceful and calm, and with a smile expires ?"

*Glynn.*

*The Doctrine of the Heavenly World.*

The term *heaven* is often made use of by persons who have, at best, very vague conceptions of its meaning, who are convinced that a state of retribution awaits them hereafter, and hope that upon some ground or other they shall be happy, but have never sought to ascertain in what that happiness will consist, nor manifested any anxiety to

possess those moral qualifications which alone can fit them for the bliss of the heavenly state. Nor are these confused notions very rare amongst many of those who know and are concerned to act upon the conviction, that whatever heaven may be, personal holiness is indispensably requisite to its enjoyment.

We state at once our conviction, that by heaven is meant a material world, destined to be the ultimate and lasting, as it will be the fitting, abode of the Redeemed in their perfected state: and that although the principal elements of their happiness will consist in freedom from sin, and in unbroken fellowship with their God and Saviour, yet that the character of their habitation, together with their refined and more perfectly organized bodies and enlarged mental capacities, will in no small degree augment the sum of their enjoyment.

In the following pages these views of the heavenly state are briefly and separately considered. In pursuing our enquiries we take as our pole-star the book of Divine revelation, and, not disdaining inferior aids, endeavour to ascertain what is the Christian's hoped for heaven.

Two honoured Apostles of our Lord and Saviour were distinguished by peculiar privileges in reference to this subject. One of them speaks of his having been caught up into the third heaven,

and of the abundance of the revelations with which he was favoured : and the other tells us of his happy vision wherein he beheld the Holy City, New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. Such honours are not ours, nor is it probable that they will be again bestowed for the purpose of making to us any further disclosures respecting future happiness than those which have been already vouchsafed. But we may soar on devotion's wing, and by meditation, faith, and hope—which honour have all the saints—feast upon those things which our bodily senses cannot reach, which our eye hath not seen nor our ear heard, but which God has been graciously pleased to reveal by His Spirit ; and whilst so engaged, can afford to bid adieu to inferior and transitory joys.

## CHAPTER I.

### HEAVEN PHYSICALLY CONSIDERED.

#### SECTION I.

##### *The Materiality of Heaven.*

THE following passage from Dr. Chalmers may serve to describe the general vagueness of conception in reference to this subject to which allusion has been made. “The common imagination that we have of Paradise on the other side of death, is that of a lofty aerial region, where the inmates float in ether, or are mysteriously suspended upon nothing; where all the warm and sensible accompaniments which give such an expression of strength and life and colouring to our present habitation, are attenuated into a sort of spiritual element, that is meagre and imperceptible, and utterly uninviting to the eyes of mortals here below; where every vestige of materialism is done away, and nothing left but certain unearthly scenes that have no power of allurement, and certain unearthly ecstacies with which it is felt impossible to sympathize.”<sup>1</sup>

We have already in the introductory chapter

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. vii. p. 283.

briefly referred to the *intermediate state*. This state is usually designated by the term "hell," that is *a place covered or concealed*: the term "paradise" is likewise applied to it in the declaration of our Lord to the penitent thief upon the cross. It is not within the limits of our design to enter into an investigation respecting the nature of the intermediate state. We are left very much in the dark respecting it, and doubtless for very wise and kind reasons.

One of these may be—we suggest it merely as probable—that further disclosures respecting it would involve the communication to us of much more knowledge than it is fitting we should possess in the present state, respecting the mode of existence and the agency, not merely of the disembodied spirits of mankind, but of angels, good and bad, of those who "are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation;" and of the arch-apostate spirit, and those likewise who, with him, may be now permitted to "go about seeking whom they may devour." We know the effect of ghost stories and spectral illusions upon vulgar and superstitious minds; and it is by no means improbable that further disclosures on the subject just referred to would have such an effect upon even a larger class as to unfit them for the discharge of their duties in the present life.

We have to do with the abode and state of the saints after the resurrection and final judgment ; but in passing may remark, that we conceive the natural rewards and punishments consequent on virtue or vice in the present world will, during the intermediate state, be felt alone, or nearly so ; and that at the general judgment will take place the superaddition to their full extent of those positive rewards and punishments, or, in other words, of those enlarged capacities of enjoyment, together with the means of its realization, which, of his own sovereign favour and free mercy, God shall bestow in the one case ; and of those enlarged capacities of suffering, together with positive inflictions equal to the power of endurance, which, as an act of justice, He shall bestow in the other.

By ‘heaven’ then we understand is intended a material world—a particular locality, and not the wide expanse of heaven—an abode, and not simply a character or state of being. With this view of heaven is essentially connected the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, which we have already noticed as being revealed in the Christian system, of which it forms indeed a most important and essential part ; for, says the Apostle, “ if the dead rise not, then is not Christ risen, and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain, ye are yet in your sins.” We are too apt to forget, amidst the various annoyances we

are subject to now, through the medium of our bodily senses, and amidst the pain we feel resulting from a diseased bodily condition or from accidental injuries, the completeness of that redemption which the Lord Jesus has effected for us. Under these circumstances we are disposed to sing, or if the voice be too feeble and the heart be too faint for song, to indulge in pensive hope the sentiments of the hymn—

“ Absent from flesh ! O blissful thought !  
 What unknown joys this moment brings !  
 Freed from the mischiefs sin has brought,  
 From pains and fears, and all their springs.

Absent from flesh ! illustrious day !  
 Surprising scene ! triumphant stroke !  
 That rends the prison of my clay,  
 And I can feel my fetters broke.”

But “the mischiefs sin has brought” *are written in our dishonoured dust*, and the period of our “adoption, to wit the redemption of our body,” the day on which shall take place the public recognition or glorious “manifestation of the sons of God,” will surely be far more illustrious than that day, which, whilst it releases us from earthly sorrows, nevertheless reminds us of a violated law and righteous curse. And how much more surprising the scene and triumphant the stroke of that day which shall witness the re-union of sanctified spirits with their renovated bodies, now

become undecaying and immortal as themselves, than of that day which witnessed their dissolution.

The doctrine of the resurrection is taught us in various passages in the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, and among the former are important declarations made respecting it by our Lord himself. It is more fully stated and illustrated than elsewhere in the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, where the Apostle triumphantly refutes the objections of those who denied the doctrine as impossible or contradictory, appealing for illustration to a fact of daily occurrence little less wonderful than the resurrection itself, namely, the reproduction of seed sown, which, as he says, "is not quickened except it die." The difference of the future body from the present is here described, and we are shewn "a mystery," something which had hitherto remained a secret, a Divine purpose never before disclosed, namely, that some of the human race will be exempt from the common lot, will never, like the vast majority, inhabit the tomb, but will nevertheless undergo a change, momentous as death itself, in order that they may be fitted for another state. "Behold, I shew you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be

changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality."

We gather from the teachings of the New Testament generally upon this subject, and especially from the chapter just alluded to, that the saints will in their ultimate state of happiness possess material bodies, and that however much these bodies may differ in structure or organization from those they possess in the present life, there will be a radical or elementary identity between them: not indeed that every particle of the bodies we may possess at death, still less that every particle which may have belonged to them during the various stages of the present life, will be restored; but that these future bodies will contain the germ or fundamental elements of our present bodies, and therefore in popular language may be called the same. We put into the well-tilled soil not the sheaves of corn we hope to gather in the joyful harvest, as though the earth were a mere storehouse or granary to preserve what we already have, but "bare grain," which decays in order that it may be revived, which is itself lost in order that we may be enriched by its more abundant produce. God gives to his mouldering saints and to the rotting seed "a body as it hath pleased him," and in both cases alike "to every seed *his own body.*"

The saints "who are alive and remain at the coming of the Lord" will not have the bodies they

then possess taken from them, to be mingled with the common mass of surrounding disorganized matter, and have entirely new bodies created for them; but those same bodies will be suddenly and mysteriously changed, abide with them eternally, and like the resurrection bodies of those who had for ages slumbered in the sepulchre, be fitted for their new and nobler habitation and employments.

Our present corporeal frames, dependent as they are on continual supplies of food for their sustenance, so gross and decaying, are not fit for an heavenly habitation. “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” That which is corruptible and perishing can in no wise be admitted to have and to hold “an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away.” God has given to men in their present state, as well as to beasts and fishes and birds, bodies fitted to their respective destinations, and He will act with like wisdom and goodness hereafter. Our present bodies are frail and perishable. They will be sown “*in corruption*,” but when raised they will *be immortal*. They will be sown “*in dishonour*,” disfigured by disease and decomposition, but when raised they will be *beautified and glorious*. They will be sown “*in weakness*,” altogether powerless, but when raised will be *strong and mighty*. They will be sown “*natural bodies*,” possessed of an animal organization, and, when

living, of animal propensities; but they will be raised "*spiritual bodies*," of refined matter and exquisite organization, exempt from the imperfections of the bodies we now possess.

We do not imagine that in these future bodies there will be that constant flux and waste of matter which our organs of digestion and assimilation are now required to supply. We shall "hunger no more neither thirst any more" after corporeal refreshments, and therefore the necessity of constant supplies of nourishment will cease; these bodies will be sustained by other means, and will flourish in pristine vigour through endless ages. "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats," says the Apostle; "but God shall destroy both it and them."<sup>2</sup>

In like manner the sexual distinctions and matrimonial relations of this life will no longer exist: for wise and gracious purposes they have been ordained in the present world, but there will be no occasion for their continuance hereafter. Our Lord replies to the sceptical and scoffing Sadducees in reference to this point, "The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage; but they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 13.

angels ; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.”<sup>3</sup>

We make but one remark further in reference to this part of our subject, and it relates to the dignity which will be conferred upon the saints at the resurrection, in their being clothed with bodies resembling that of their Elder Brother and Forerunner into the heavenly world. As we have borne the image of “the first man, who is of the earth, earthly,” and in whom we fell ; so likewise shall we bear the image of “the second man, who is the Lord from heaven, in whom we are justified and saved. Let us then rejoice that as Christians “our citizenship is in heaven ;” and amidst the scoffs of infidelity, which still asks sneeringly “Where is the promise of his coming ?” continue steadfastly to “look (from thence) for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”<sup>4</sup>

If then the saints are to be possessed of material organical structures in their future state of happiness, those structures, however highly attenuated, subtile, or refined; must have some *material substratum* upon which to rest, or a material world for their habitation.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xx. 34-36.

<sup>4</sup> Phil. iii. 20, 21.

Heaven is, moreover, frequently spoken of in the word of God, as a local habitation and material world. "In My Father's house (says our Lord to his sorrowing disciples), are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare *a place* for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also."<sup>5</sup>

The Apostle Peter declares that "the heavens and the earth which are now (by which we understand the terraqueous globe we inhabit and the atmosphere surrounding it) by the word of God are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men:" that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein be burned up: nevertheless (he adds in the full assurance of faith and hope,) we according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."<sup>6</sup>

In reference to these passages we may remark that our Lord doubtless meant by the phrase "My Father's house," the heavenly kingdom or world; and that the phrase "many mansions" is probably used in allusion to the various apartments in the

<sup>5</sup> John xiv. 2, 3.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 7-14.

Temple, and to the vast number of persons lodged there, the Jewish Temple being typical of heaven, as the Apostle shews at length in the Epistle to the Hebrews. As the great High Priest of his church our blessed Redeemer is now set “on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” We are assured that “Jesus is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, authorities, and powers being made subject unto Him; so that in all things he has the pre-eminence. Here again we sing with Dr. Watts—

“O for a sight, a pleasing sight  
Of our Almighty Father’s throne !  
There sits our Saviour crown’d with light,  
*Cloth’d in a body like our own.*

Adoring saints around him stand,  
And thrones and powers before him fall :  
The God shines gracious thro’ the man,  
And sheds sweet glories on them all.”\*

Yes, there on the throne of God in heaven, where we hope to dwell ultimately, body and soul together, and where shortly our separate spirits may be “present with the Lord,” sits our glorified Redeemer, clothed in our nature: and though exalted as He now is, “He is not ashamed to call us *brethren!*” for He has prepared for

\* Heb. viii. 1, 2.

\* 23rd Hymn, 2nd Book.

us a city. He left earth, as did Enoch and Elijah, "clothed in a body like our own;"<sup>1</sup> but it is probable that the bodies of our Lord and of these ancient worthies, were changed in their ascent from earth to heaven in some such manner as the bodies of the saints, living on earth at the resurrection, will be when "they shall be caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air," thenceforth with the risen saints to "be for ever with the Lord."

In reference to the passage above quoted from the second Epistle of Peter, we may remark that the Apostle employs the same terms to designate the future residence of the Redeemed as he employs to designate this our present habitation, which is to pass away; that he refers to one point only as a distinguishing and characteristic feature of the future world, namely that, unlike the present one, which every where bears marks of the curse and ruin caused by the fall and iniquity of man, it shall be the habitation of righteousness alone;—and therefore we may repeat the conclusion, that, although heaven—designed as it is for the ultimate display of the Divine perfections on a scale of grandeur and extent surpassing "imagination's utmost thought," and as unstained, uncursed by evil—will infinitely exceed in its purity and loveliness our noblest conceptions,

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiv. 36, to the end.

yet that in its essential elements and structure it will resemble the present earth, and possess as real and solid a materiality.

## SECTION II.

*The Locality of Heaven.*

This is a topic of considerable interest, and one respecting which there have been various conjectures. Some have supposed that the *Sun* will be the future residence of the saints; others that the earth we now inhabit, having been purified from every principle of corruption, will be rebuilt from the ruins of the general conflagration and become their lasting habitation; others that a new world will, at the close of the present administration of affairs, be created for their reception. Some again, putting a literal translation upon the description of the New Jerusalem contained in the 21st chapter, and the first five verses of the 22nd chapter of the book of the Revelations, have supposed — absurdly enough, as we conceive — that the future abode of the righteous will be a city of unparalleled splendour and strength already built in some celestial world, to be brought down and settled upon this earth by angelic might; whilst others suppose that the saints will ultimately be the inhabitants of a world now existing in a distant

region of the universe, beyond the starry firmament and the discovery of the human senses. In addition to these various hypotheses we may mention two other suppositions, stated as possible by Dr. Dick,<sup>2</sup> namely, "That the redeemed inhabitants of heaven may be permitted to transport themselves from one region or world to another, and be furnished with faculties and vehicles for this purpose: or that, after remaining for a certain lapse of ages in that particular world to which they shall be introduced immediately after the resurrection, they may be transported to another region of the universe, to contemplate a new scene of creating power and intelligence, and afterwards pass, at distant intervals, through a successive series of transports in order to obtain more ample prospects of the riches and glory of God's universal kingdom."

The more general belief probably is, that the present earth will be the lasting abode of the Redeemed. Arguing from the supposed indestructibility of matter, many contend that the language of the Apostle Peter, in the passage from his second Epistle quoted in the preceding section, cannot mean that our world will be actually annihilated, but merely that it will be so purified and remodelled as to become a fit residence for holy and happy beings. But the language appears to us to

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophy of a Future State*, p. 244.

be too strong and emphatic, and of far too literal a cast to admit of such an interpretation. We apprehend there is considerable danger in the practice of thus explaining away or modifying scriptural statements, and thereby weakening the force of the sacred text. Philosophy is not, alone, competent to decide matters of this nature. The question is—not whether this or that event be philosophically possible, but—whether it is the Divine will that the supposed event shall take place. He who can create innumerable worlds for His own glory, can doubtless cause any one of them, the moment it has answered its purpose in the economy of His providence, to sink into utter and endless annihilation ; and that without disturbing the order of the system to which it immediately belongs, still less producing confusion among the multitudinous and mighty orbs, which beyond that system illumine and adorn His vast creation. Again we ask, if this world is to be the home of our continued existence, what is to become of us whilst all the blaze, disorder, and ruin adverted to is taking place ? A mighty convulsion will no doubt occur ; as the means of bringing together those particles which shall constitute our future bodies and of raising them from the dust : but are these bodies when animated to continue amidst the conflagrations and terror of the scene, or to witness it from some distant world to which they shall be transferred until the mighty

changes—if merely changes—are completed, and afterwards to return to it as their final habitation? We ask for grounds upon which to sustain such opinions. Nor, we imagine, will the supposition that this world is destined to be the future abode of the Redeemed be found to accord with the more general representations of Scripture concerning heaven, or with the previously quoted declaration of our Lord respecting the object of his ascension thither.

We forbear entering upon a formal refutation of the various other opinions which have been broached on this subject as above enumerated, since the observations we are now about to offer will, if they have ought of truth or probability belonging to them, render a discussion which would involve in most cases a repetition of the same arguments quite unnecessary. Our firm persuasion is, that the eternal habitation of the saints already exists, and is identical with that world “in which the omnipresent Deity is said to afford a nearer and more immediate view of himself, and a more sensible manifestation of His glory, than in the other parts of the universe:”<sup>3</sup> that it is that world where the person of our Lord in his glorified humanity now is, variously designated in scriptural phraseology as “the heaven of heavens,” “the third heaven,” “the throne of God,” “the

<sup>3</sup> Encyc. Brit. Art. *Heaven*.

high and holy place," "the temple of Jehovah," and termed by our Lord His "Father's house." "The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven."<sup>4</sup> "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."<sup>5</sup> The saints in glory are said to be "before the throne of God, and to serve Him day and night in His temple,"<sup>6</sup> having been delivered, by virtue of the great atonement, from the guilt and pollution of sin. The Apostle Paul in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, speaking of "the visions and revelations of the Lord" to himself, says—"I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth;) such an one caught up to *the third heaven*. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth); how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter."<sup>7</sup> The term "paradise" is here, as also in Rev. ii. 7, used in reference to the ultimate abode of the blessed. It is applied by the Apostle to the same place as that he refers to under the designation "the third heaven." The Jews considered the first hea-

<sup>4</sup> Psalm xi. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. vii. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Heb. ix. 24.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 2-4.

ven to be the atmosphere or region below the firmament, where birds fly and the clouds and tempests are gathered; the second heaven they deemed to be the spacious concave above the atmosphere, the firmament itself, in which the sun, moon, and stars are disposed; and by the "third heaven" they understood the world of glory, the high and holy place of Jehovah, still more remote, beyond the discovery of the human senses.

To the minds of those who are familiar with the word of God, numerous passages will instantly recur in which the term heaven is thus variously applied. Hence Jesus is said to have "ascended up far above all heavens,"<sup>6</sup> and to be an High Priest "made higher than the heavens."<sup>7</sup> Stephen, the first Christian martyr, stands in the midst of an infidel and perfidious band of persecutors, his face is lighted up with intelligence and faith—well may they gaze upon it, it is like an angel's: whilst they gaze he preaches, rehearsing the history of Divine providence and the scenes of Calvary: whilst they were cut to the heart by his faithful testimony, and their malice boiled within them, "he being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right-hand of God."<sup>8</sup> The

<sup>6</sup> Eph. iv. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. vii. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Acts vii. 54—60.

term “heavens” (in the plural) is frequently used to denote the starry firmament, or second heaven, alone, and probably is so used in the expression of Stephen just quoted. It is possible that the martyr’s corporeal vision was so miraculously strengthened as that it was enabled to penetrate not merely those vast regions of space which are comprehended in the designation ‘the lower aerial heaven,’ but also through the firmament or sidereal heavens, the vast field of astronomical investigations, and to perceive the world of glory and the person of our Lord. Why should it be thought a thing incredible, that in this moment in which the first martyr of Christianity must set an example of quenchless zeal and unquailing fortitude in the great cause to all who should succeed him in the same honourable profession—now forming an illustrious army of confessors and martyrs, whose names are in the book of life—the faithful Redeemer, to whom all power in heaven and earth is given, should by one of the first acts of His mediatorial sovereignty so honour and sustain His servant, and thereby confound His adversaries, as to confirm to his friends and foes alike His declarations when upon earth, namely that He would be with His Church always, even unto the end of the world, and that the councils of earth and hell united should never prevail against it? There is something sublime in the scene and inspiring in the fact presented to us in the sacred

narrative ; and though it be a digression from our immediate subject, we cannot refrain from noticing the attitude in which Jesus, “the Son of Man,” is said to have been seen on this occasion, “STANDING on the right hand of God.” The Saviour is represented, in passages already quoted in this chapter, as “SEATED” on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Here he appears “STANDING,” as if, like a skilful and courageous general, who in the crisis of a tremendous war rushes with a calm impetuosity to the inmost ranks, urging his men to a last and desperate struggle for the victory, he had risen to enkindle in the breast of his servant sevenfold animation, whilst his enemies gnash upon him with their teeth and stone him into the agonies of death;—as though he were stepping forth from his glory to meet and embrace the spirit thus ruthlessly driven from a world not worthy of it, ere the supplicating saint could commend it to his reception ; and were waiting to place upon the mild and radiant brow, now being mangled by craggy rock, “a crown of life” such as, according to a subsequently recorded promise, shall be bestowed upon all who are similarly “faithful unto death.”

To return to the immediate subject of the present section, we remind you that, as already stated (page 27), we consider the world in which the saints are ultimately to dwell, to be identical with that

place frequently presented to our notice in the Scriptures under the designations above quoted, one of these and not the least striking among them being "the throne of God."

Now if this notion be correct, the observations we are about to introduce, and which with one remark upon them will close this section, will furnish us not merely with a probable supposition in regard to the locality of the heavenly world, but likewise serve to describe to some extent the magnitude and grandeur of that world. None we presume will dispute the fact that there is a most striking uniformity of design manifested throughout the entire range of the Divine operations with which we are acquainted, or that His physical operations are in universal harmony with, and subservient to, the purposes of His moral administration. May we not therefore entertain the supposition, that the glorious abode of the Most High, where His saints shall ultimately dwell in His presence, is the centre of the entire physical creation, around which revolve, and by the attractive influence of which are sustained in their appointed orbits, the myriads of worlds, of suns and systems, which to His intelligent creatures declare the glory of God, and shew forth His handywork; occupying a position in relation to the universe at large, similar to that of the central globe, around which our earth and the various other planets of the solar system per-

form their appointed revolutions ;—that it is in fact the Capital of the physical empire of Jehovah, the Acropolis of the vast and glorious universe ?

The observations above alluded to are contained in the next paragraph, extracted from “The Philosophy of a Future State.”

“ The Scriptures frequently refer to a particular place, circumstance, or manifestation, termed ‘the throne of God,’ as in the following passages :— “ Heaven is *my throne*, and the earth is my footstool.” “ The Lord hath prepared *his throne in the heavens.*” “ *A glorious high throne*, from the beginning, is the place of thy sanctuary.” “ Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.” “ Blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne.”—These, and similar expressions and representations, must be considered either as merely metaphorical, or as referring to some particular region of the universe, where the Divine glory is reflected in some peculiarly magnificent manner from material objects, and where the manifestations of the Divine character are most illustriously displayed. If there be a reference to the splendour and magnitude of a particular portion of creation, there is an astronomical idea which may help us to form some conception of this “ glorious high throne,” which is the peculiar residence of the Eternal. It is now considered by astronomers,

as highly probable, if not certain, from late observations, from the nature of gravitation, and other circumstances, that all the systems of the universe revolve round one common centre,—and that this centre may bear as great a proportion, in point of magnitude, to the universal assemblage of systems, as the sun does to his surrounding planets. And, since our sun is five hundred times larger than the earth, and all the other planets and their satellites taken together,—on the same scale, such a central body would be five hundred times larger than all the systems and worlds in the universe. Here, then, may be a vast universe of itself—an example of material creation, exceeding all the rest in magnitude and splendour, and in which are blended the glories of every other system. If this is in reality the case, it may with the most emphatic propriety be termed, THE THRONE OF GOD.

“ This is the most sublime and magnificent idea that can possibly enter into the mind of man. We feel oppressed and overwhelmed in endeavouring to form even a faint representation of it. But, however much it may overpower our feeble conceptions, we ought not to revolt at the idea of so glorious an extension of the works of God ; since nothing less magnificent seems suitable to a Being of infinite perfections.—This grand central body may be considered as the *Capital* of the universe. From this glorious centre, embassies may be occasionally des-

patched to all surrounding worlds, in every region of space. Here, too, deputations from all the different provinces of creation may occasionally assemble, and the inhabitants of different worlds mingle with each other, and learn the grand outline of those physical operations and moral transactions, which have taken place in their respective spheres. Here, may be exhibited to the view of unnumbered multitudes, objects of sublimity and glory, which are nowhere else to be found within the wide extent of creation. Here, intelligences of the highest order, who have attained the most sublime heights of knowledge and virtue, may form the principal part of the population of this magnificent region. Here, the glorified body of the Redeemer may have taken its principal station, as "the head of all principalities and powers:" and here, likewise, Enoch and Elijah may reside, in the mean time, in order to learn the history of the magnificent plans and operations of Deity, that they may be enabled to communicate intelligence respecting them to their brethren of the race of Adam, when they shall again mingle with them in the world allotted for their abode, after the general resurrection."<sup>2</sup>

It will appear from the latter portion of the above extract, that the respected author's opinion does not fully accord with our own as before given,

\* "Philosophy of a Future State," page 326.8.

namely, that the world thus designated “the throne of God” will be the eternal abode of the multitude of the redeemed. But, with all proper deference, we ask,—if it be probable, as admitted, that the glorified body of the Redeemer may have here taken its principal station, and likewise that this is the present residence of Enoch and Elijah—*on what grounds* are we to expect that they will not always reside here, or that the faithful in general will have any other abode than this as their final home? Is there not much greater reason, argumentatively and scripturally, to suppose that we shall go to them; than there is to imagine that they will return to us: or inhabit, with us, a world inferior in any respect to that which is the sphere of their present enjoyment?

### SECTION III.

#### *The magnitude and splendours of Heaven.*

We shall endeavour in this section to illustrate somewhat further, the idea incidentally introduced into the last section; though not immediately belonging to that part of our subject. A world built by the Almighty Architect for such glorious purposes as those we have referred to, and presented to our notice under designations so truly sublime; we may reasonably suppose to be one of immense

magnitude. The terraqueous globe which we now inhabit is but as a speck—a mere point in the physical creation. Astronomers tell us that in the solar system alone, there are at least twenty-nine planets ; amongst which there are worlds a thousand times larger than this earth ; and that the sun around which they perform their appointed circles, is five hundred times larger than all of them put together, his circumference being capable of enclosing more than twelve hundred thousand globes as large as ours ;—that further, there are within the reach of their present discovery, more than eighty millions of stars ; each of which is in all probability, as they suppose, the centre of a system, whose planets are at least equal in number and magnitude to those of the solar system : and that although these eighty millions of systems are, at the lowest computation, supposed to comprehend two thousand four hundred millions of worlds, yet that altogether they form but a small portion of the material universe,—that millions upon millions of worlds are doubtless distributed through boundless space, far beyond the discovery of mortals ; and that the whole, as stated in the above extract, and still further elucidated in the work from which it is taken, appear from modern discoveries to be revolving round, or to have a gravitating tendency towards, a common centre, by which principle these untold myriads of worlds are all upheld in unbroken and perpetual

harmony. Now if the centre around which all worlds thus revolve be that heavenly world which is denominated the throne of God, and which, as we have attempted to show, is to be the future residence of the redeemed ; and if this world be, as stated, according to general analogies, five hundred times larger than the entire universe besides, what an inconceivable magnitude must it possess ! and what ample scope must such a world afford for the exercise of all the energies of the glorified beings who shall inhabit it, without their transportation from world to world at distant intervals for that purpose. Here then is a world, the admeasurements of which surpass the symbols of this earth's arithmetic to express, or the powers of the human intellect in the present state to comprehend. Were we to stand, and with the naked eye gaze upon a summer's noonday sun, whilst shining upon us in all his unclouded brilliancy, we should suffer, for our temerity, the loss of that sense which is the medium of our perception of light and colour; by his effulgent rays, our corporeal vision would be extinguished. So, when with a mental eye we survey the works of the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity,—of Him “ who only hath immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto ;” when we attempt a conception of the extent of his dominion, or of the magnitude of that world where He has his high abode and main-

tains his glorious throne, our minds, cowering with dismay, sink down astonished and oppressed. Here are heights which in our loftiest soarings we cannot scale—depths which we cannot fathom—lengths and breadths illimitable.\* Further, we remark,

\* Dr. Watts probably entertained an idea somewhat similar to the above, when he composed the following lines. They are so very appropriate to the subject before us, and lead us so delightfully from the contemplation of the wondrous works of God to adore their great Author, that we cannot refrain from inserting them here, and presume our readers will deem apology for so doing quite unnecessary.

"Eternal power! whose high abode  
Becomes the grandeur of a God;  
Infinite length beyond the bounds  
Where stars revolve their little rounds.

The lowest step beneath thy seat  
Rises too high for Gabriel's feet :  
In vain the tall Archangel tries  
To reach thy height with wondering eyes.

Thy dazzling beauties whilst he sings,  
He hides his face behind his wings ;  
And ranks of shining thrones around  
Fall worshipping, and spread the ground.

Lord ! what shall earth and ashes do ?  
We would adore our Maker too :  
From sin and dust to thee we cry,  
'The great, the holy, and the high.'

Earth from afar has heard thy fame,  
And worms have learnt to lisp thy name ;  
But oh ! the glories of thy mind  
Leave all our soaring thoughts behind.

God is in heaven and men below :  
Be short our tunes ; our words be few ;  
A sacred reverence checks our songs,  
And praise sits silent on our tongues.'

that the heavenly world, as it now is, will continue to be the abode of various orders of intelligent creatures—of myriads of Angelic beings, as well as the redeemed and sanctified of the human family. It is not improbable, moreover, that the whole, or a vast portion of the inhabitants of numerous other worlds, with which at present we are unacquainted, having passed through a state of probation, in which their characters will have been tested and their virtuous habits confirmed, will be at length, through succeeding ages, as the divine purposes become matured and consummated, transferred to this world of which we write, as their ultimate and everlasting abode. Now, in order that all these holy and happy intelligences may have full scope for their exalted energies, and be furnished with new and ever varied objects of delight, this world must necessarily be of immeasurable extent. Again, since “order is heaven’s first law,” we suggest, as by no means an improbability, that although each class of the subjects of God’s moral government, who may become denizens of this glorious world, may hold frequent and most delightful intercourse with the other, yet a different locality in it may be assigned to each class respectively, as its more especial and peculiar residence. It is not without some show of reason that we suppose our Lord refers to this, when he tells his disciples of the “*many mansions*” that are in his Father’s house, and pro-

mises them that in that happy world, to which he gives so felicitous a designation—Jehovah being their Father as well as his Father, and their God as well as his God—and among those many mansions, he will prepare a place for them, that they may for ever dwell with him. The language of the Apostle John in the Apocalypse seems to favour these suppositions. He describes the abode of the saints in the heavenly world as a City.<sup>1</sup> He tells us its name, “New Jerusalem,” thus rendering it the antitype of the royal city, to which from all quarters the Israelites of old flocked at the appointed seasons, to keep their solemn feasts and worship in the temple of their God. Upon the gates of this heavenly city he says are written the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, and upon its foundations are seen inscribed the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb; to signify that it is the abode of the true Israel—the chosen, redeemed, and sanctified Church of God, collected and built up through the instrumentality of the doctrine of redemption by “the precious blood of Christ,” which the Apostles gloried in proclaiming. Further, with regard to the extent of this city the Apostle says, “He (that is, the angel) that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof; and he measured the city with the reed, twelve

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xxi.

thousand furlongs ; the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal ; and he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits according to the measure of a man, that is of the angel." These metaphorical representations are doubtless intended to convey to our minds an idea of the amplitude of accommodation provided for the innumerable company of the redeemed in the heavenly world, so that the believer in Jesus of feeblest intellect, obscurest situation, or most abject circumstances in this world, may not be discouraged with the idea that in heaven there will be no room for him.

We remark further, that as heaven is to be the abode of the Saints when arrived at a state of perfection, and is to be the seat of their final and glorious reward, it will doubtless fully correspond with their personal condition, and consequently be divested of every thing which can mar its loveliness, and be richly adorned with every thing that will harmonize with the dignity, or can contribute to the happiness, of its inhabitants. This might be argued from the fitness or suitability of such an arrangement in itself, from the general uniformity of the divine operations, or from the analogy which has subsisted between the condition of this world at different periods and that of its accountable inhabitant, viewing him in his primal state as holy, and subsequently as depraved. At the

period of this earth's creation "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy;" its Maker himself looked with complacency upon the work of his hands and "saw that it was good." It became however the abode of Sin. That same day a dark and portentous cloud gathered over it. It was cursed for the sake of its inhabitant, who had transgressed the law of its Maker and his own. It was destined henceforward to bring forth thorns and thistles—fit emblems of those prickling goads by which sin stings the conscience and wounds the heart. From that moment good was adulterated with evil, that which was lovely upon the face of nature began to fade, that which was unlovely and noxious grew and became rampant. In course of time men multiplied, and their wickedness extended itself to the very heavens. Their guilt brought down upon this once paradaical world the divine vengeance; its inhabitants with a few exceptions were swept from the face of the earth, and the earth itself was mournfully and extensively defaced by the inundations of a mighty deluge. Now it is lying in ruins, a mere wreck of its original greatness and beauty. God has not however left himself without witness, nor the world without hope. He places in the heavens the symbol of his covenant of mercy, and gives the earth which it encircles rain from above and fruitful seasons, filling the mouths of its inhabitants with

food, and their hearts with gladness. The globe exhibits on every hand relics of its former grandeur, and presents to us objects of loveliness which occasion wonder and delight in all their beholders. This "little orb" is even now

"Adorned

With hill, and dale, and lawn, and winding vale,  
 Woodland, and stream, and lake, and rolling seas,  
 Green mead, and fruitful tree, and fertile grain,  
 And herb and flower. . . . . adorned  
 With numerous beasts of every kind, with fowl  
 Of every wing and every tuneful note."<sup>\*</sup>

It still like the starry firmament proclaims the glories of its Creator, and in silent demonstration says, "the hand that made me is divine."

We glance at the condition of its inhabitant—man. He was originally created in the likeness of his Maker, and though now fallen, depraved, and mortal, must still be classed amongst the noblest productions of the wisdom and power of Deity: whether we contemplate the beauty and vigour of his person, the extent of his intellectual capacities, or the keenness of the susceptibilities of his moral constitution, we feel that he occupies a high position in the scale of being. He is even now—pardon this application of a phrase written originally in reference to one of different rank—

"Majestic, though in ruins,"

\* Pollok, "Course of Time," book ii. page 24.

though the lustre of his divine origin is defaced or obscured by the earthly image subsequently impressed. But when he shall be fully recovered from his lapsed condition, and clad in the robes of purity, light, and immortality, he shall again " bear the image of the heavenly ;" the lineaments of his countenance shall testify of his relationship to the skies ; he shall be like his glorious Lord, and being invested with far higher dignity than his first parent ever wore, be fitted for a nobler and unfading habitation, in exalted society and unmingled bliss.

Since then the present world has been made to correspond in its general aspect with the condition of man in his fallen state as well as in his condition of primeval purity ; since it, now that the majority of his race is in a state of depravity and alienation from God, though cursed on account of sin, abounds with so much that is magnificent and delightful, may we not rest assured that that world which is to be their abode hereafter, when raised to a state of spotless purity and perfection, will also correspond with their exalted position—with their distinguished purity of character, and their new and nobler sensibilities ?—that it will as far transcend, in its ineffable splendours and its rich and varied delights, the glories of the present world, as the personal condition of the saints in glory will in every respect surpass their condition,

whilst belonging to the church militant, the subjects of numerous imperfections here on earth.

With these ideas the metaphorical but sublime description which the Apostle John gives us of the glorious abode of the saints will be found again to accord. He speaks of the pearly gates of the Holy City, of its wall great and high, built of jasper, and having its foundations garnished with all manner of precious stones ; of the City itself as being of pure transparent gold, like glass refined ; of its having “no need of the sun neither of the moon to shine in it, seeing that it has the glory of God to lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” The temple built by Solomon in Jerusalem was said to be “exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries ;” there was expended upon it from the resources of many nations whatever could contribute to its costliness or grandeur, yet it was a mere shadow, and could therefore only convey the most distant conception to our minds of this far more glorious temple on high, built by Jehovah himself—this temple which will excite the admiration of the inhabitants, and attract the worshippers of many worlds. The splendours of earthly royalty are well nigh sufficient to dazzle and confuse our vision : what then must be the splendours of that world which is the palace of Jehovah, the place where reigns in majesty, glorious to all the saints, the King of

kings and Lord of lords most high! With what inimitable propriety is that world designated "the inheritance of the saints in light," where "the Father of lights" sheds forth without shadow or decline the effulgence of his own glory; and the righteous themselves, beholding it not as in a glass but "face to face, shall be changed into the same image," and reflecting that glory "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

" Since o'er thy footstool here below,  
     Such beauteous gems are thrown,  
     O, what magnificence must glow,  
         My God, around thy throne!  
     So brilliant here these drops of light,  
         There the full ocean rolls how bright!  
     If night's blue curtain of the sky,  
         With thousand stars inwrought,  
     Hung like some royal canopy,  
         With glittering diamonds fraught,  
     Be, Lord, thy temple's outer veil,  
         What glory round the shrine must dwell!  
     The dazzling Sun, at noontide hour,  
         Forth from his flaming vase,  
     Flinging o'er earth his golden shower,  
         Till vale and mountain blaze,  
     But shows, O Lord, one beam of thine :  
         What then the day where thou dost shine!  
     Ah ! how shall these dim eyes endure  
         That noon of living rays?  
     Or how my spirit so impure,  
         Upon thy brightness gaze?  
     Anoint, O Lord, anoint my sight,  
         And robe me for that world of light!"

## SECTION IV.

*The Stability of Heaven.*

Every thing relating to the present world is liable to change and dissolution. The mighty oak of the forest that has survived one generation of men after another, who have been swept in succession to the tomb, which spreading forth its branches, and striking deep and wide its roots, has for ages remained uninjured by the lightning's flash and wintry tempestuous blasts, at length decays, and either becomes fuel for the fire or moulders into dust. The merchant vessel which had heretofore weathered the storm, and safely deposited her cargo in the place appointed by her confiding proprietor, is, richly laden from some distant shore, again returning to her home ; she sails majestically upon the unruffled surface of the mighty deep, all seems prosperous and hopeful ; but ere long the wind howls, the billows roll, the waves foam, she is furiously dashed upon some fatal rock, and all, all is lost.

Hamlets and villages, towns and cities, mansions of nobles and royal palaces, are alike exposed to a thousand casualties. We one day behold them in all their glory, invested with the charms of rural simplicity, or boasting of their wealth

and pomp and greatness: again we look, and nought but scenes of desolation meet our gaze. They are gone. Sepulchral silence reigns all around, which no sound of harp or lute, or human voice, falling upon the ear, shall ever break. The swelling flood, the rapid conflagration, the volcanic eruption with its rolling tide of fiery lava, or the convulsions of earthquake, have done much; and the savage violence and reckless ravages of war have accomplished more, in securing their full, final, and disastrous overthrow. The city of Jerusalem and its gorgeous temple, which once decked the mountains of Palestine—the pride of the Jews, the envy of surrounding nations, and typical even of heaven itself, have, with the entire Jewish economy to which they belonged, long since answered the purposes they were intended by Divine providence to subserve, and are now no more: not one stone has been left upon another, that has not been thrown down. And what need we say further, for this earth itself, and all its appurtenances, being polluted by sin and death, is destined at length, when all the human race shall have been adjudged to their final recompence, if not to be utterly annihilated, yet so to “pass away” as to lose its present character, and probably its existence as a separate world, for it shall be “dissolved and burned up.” Not so however with heaven. That vast and glorious structure has been

reared for no temporary or subsidiary purposes, but to be the abode of perfection, and a theatre for the unparalleled and everlasting display of the Divine glories. Since God wills that it shall endure eternally, and that his saints shall there enjoy a fulness and perpetuity of bliss, it never, never can lose its lustre, still less cease to be. It will survive the wreck of mightiest empires and the crush of many worlds.

The rightful heir to the ancestral mansion may here be deprived of his birthright by ruthless, unblushing violence or by sneaking fraud. His estate may become the prey of the calamities we have enumerated, or the very day he lays hold of his prize, he may himself be taken captive by death, and compelled to relinquish it for the enjoyment of his successor. Such facts are not uncommon in the present life—

“ So swift treads sorrow on the heels of joy.”

The heir of heaven however need not be under any apprehensions in regard to the safety of his inheritance. *It is reserved* for him by the Almighty hand that formed it and that upholds all worlds; by the miracle-working power of whose hand he likewise shall himself be kept from fatal shipwreck and endowed with an immortal nature and befitting capabilities for its enjoyment. *It is incorruptible*—no seeds of decay shall ever be sown in that

inheritance, whose dust is purest gold and whose stones are brilliants. *It is undefiled*—evil of every kind shall be unknown there, except that the recollection of deliverance from it, shall awaken with deeper gratitude and call forth in nobler strains the blissful anthem, “To him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood be all honour, glory, and praise for ever.” *It is unfading*—its fields are adorned with living green, and strewn on every hand with fresh and fragrant amaranths. It lies beyond those regions where moth and rust corrupt, or where thieves break through and steal.

We cannot better conclude this part of our subject than by briefly summing up, and adducing such practical reflections as it naturally suggests for the consolation of the afflicted and poor members of the great household of faith—we say “great household,” for great it will be alike as regards its dignity or its numbers. We have no sympathy with the cold hearts or contracted faith of those who refrain from giving to their fellow-sinners that free invitation and welcome which God gives them, who refrain from preaching the gospel to “every creature” as though they were apprehensive that too many would believe and be saved, who expatriate much less upon those promises and predictions of God’s word which relate to the general spread of Divine truth and the enjoyment

of heaven by the “great multitude which no man can number,” than they fix their contemplations and concentrate their complacencies upon the passage “Fear not *little* flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give *you* the kingdom.”

We trust the attempt which has been made in the foregoing chapter to render somewhat more distinct the object of the Christian’s faith and hope has not proved altogether fruitless. We say therefore, let your faith view with a stedfast eye and lay hold with an unrelaxing grasp of the substance of your hope, of the inheritance which is reserved for you. Regard your future portion as a certain and unmistakeable reality,—as something which, although invisible to sense, and in its full glory and excellence beyond your utmost mental conceptions in the present state, is in itself no fictitious, mysterious, or mere ideal existence; but something which actually is, something which faith can realize now, and which shall be fully and eternally enjoyed when

“Faith is sweetly lost in sight,  
And hope in full supreme delight;”—

when you shall attain your majority, and as the heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, have an entrance ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of your Lord and Saviour.

Then, if the subject be invested with such delightful certainty as to its great facts, although

imperfectly understood and delineated in detail, we ask, "Why should the children of a king go mourning all their days?" Does not their habitual gloom imply in most instances a want of understanding, or great weakness of faith? Let them think less of their present outward circumstances, and contemplate more the exceeding great and precious promises which have been given to them in connexion with the power and faithfulness of Him who made them.

Are they poor in this world, neither in possession nor expecting in reversion the enjoyment of wide patrimonial freeholds or of noble mansions and heir-looms, having not so much inheritance on earth as their feet can stand upon? What then! By faith they are made the rich possessors of an inheritance which infinitely surpasses all that earth can boast, and which shall be enjoyed, not by themselves and others in succession, but by themselves in endless perpetuity. Are they destitute of friends and outcasts from home? Let them remember that the Son of Man once had not where to lay his head; and that a home awaits them, the enjoyments of which will speedily make them forget the toils of the wilderness; a home not in a moveable and frail tabernacle, but in a city which hath foundations, a "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Their mansion is in their Father's land, in a better country, in

a kingdom which cannot be shaken, a kingdom prepared for them in the Divine purpose before earth was formed; and which, pure as the character, unchangeable as the decrees, and lasting as the government of God, shall endure, the abode of peace and blessedness, the glory and admiration of the universe, for ever, for ever, for ever!

Are the heirs of heaven afflicted in this world, their present bodies infested with disease and racked with pain; or like him, who was laid at the gate of one that clothed himself in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day, full of sores? What then! Are not their sorrows and pains hastening to a final close? and shall they not in meekness and patience possess their souls under the chastisements of paternal love, which, if effective, shall purify their affections and strengthen the wings of that faith which shall convey them also to Abraham's bosom? Shall they repine at their own lot, or can they envy that of others, of those whose flesh is now pampered with impunity, who riot in luxuries, who flourish to advanced age and at last have no bands in their death, but whose strength is firm? Surely not, for in the sanctuary of God they have learned that those who in this world have sown only to the flesh shall of the flesh hereafter reap only corruption, and will be destroyed for ever; whilst the Christian is hastening to the hour when he shall

part for ever with corruptibility and pain, and reap life everlasting. If the enigma of human life is to be thus solved, and such is to be your consummation, ye humble followers of the Lamb, we bid you "awake and sing" though ye now dwell in the dust! "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again we say, Rejoice! Henceforth let the murmuring voice be hushed, and the troubled spirit become calm, let the head that is bowed down be lifted up, the weak hands strengthened, and the feeble knees confirmed.

" Ye humble souls, complain no more;  
 Let faith survey your future store :  
 How happy, how divinely blest,  
 The sacred words of truth attest.  
  
 In vain the sons of wealth and pride  
 Despise your lot, your hopes deride ;  
 In vain they boast their little stores,—  
 Trifles are *theirs*, a kingdom *yours*.  
  
 A kingdom of immense delight,  
 Where health and peace and joy unite ;  
 Where undeclining pleasures rise,  
 And every wish hath full supplies."

Whilst however we thus sympathise with those members of the divine family who are made the partakers of affliction or poverty, we do not withhold our humble but warm congratulations from others. We rejoice to know that those who are "rich in this world" are by no arbitrary decree of Heaven excluded from their share in its glorious

inheritance. Whilst it is recorded as a fact, that *not many* of the wealthy, *not many* of the mighty, *not many* of the noble are called; the names of *some* of them of every generation are written in the Book of life. The sons of wealth are not of necessity the sons of pride; and doubly honoured are they who, having large possessions, are not highminded, but fear the Lord; who "trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God who giveth us all things richly to enjoy;" whose highest pleasure is found in ministering to the necessities of their poorer brethren, in consecrating the influence of their station and the abundance of their wealth to the advancement of the Redeemer's cause, or in adding to those streams of Christian charity by which the condition of the outcast and destitute of the human family is so much ameliorated. May the Lord increase such a thousand-fold.

## CHAPTER II.

### HEAVEN MORALLY CONSIDERED.

FROM what we have already advanced in the preceding chapter, it may be seen that the future abode of the saints will be every way suitable for the everlasting habitation of beings possessed of a refined corporeal structure and of a physical organization,—a structure and organization which shall enable them to pursue a course of extensive and untiring action in reference to objects which shall be promotive of their intelligence, consonant with their purity, and augmentive of their enjoyment. We now therefore proceed, and that briefly, to show that the intellectual and moral character of the redeemed, and of the various orders of holy beings with whom they may associate, and the method in which these faculties will be employed, together with that sense of the Divine presence and approval, and of their own eternal security, which they will possess ; will fully comport with all to which we have referred as lovely and magnificent in their external condition, and complete that unbounded measure of happiness which we have

stated they will enjoy. We shall not for two reasons enter at length upon this part of our subject—first, because by doing so we should swell the number of our pages to an extent which would have a tendency to limit their circulation amongst a class of readers for whose use they are chiefly intended; and secondly, because the topics adverted to come so frequently within the range of pulpit ministrations and of private Christian meditation, as to render the task in a great measure unnecessary. They form however a most important part of our subject, and therefore cannot be allowed to pass without distinct notice.

## SECTION I.

*The Intellectual and Moral Character of the Inhabitants of Heaven.*

The observation that “Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people,” although somewhat trite, is not on that account the less true. There is a mutual adaptation or fitness between their external circumstances and the mental capabilities and dispositions of heaven’s inhabitants to each other. The angels are great in wisdom and excel in strength. They are endowed with some capabilities far beyond those possessed at present by the human family, which ranks next to them in the

intelligent creation ; but how far these superior endowments may extend we do not know. They doubtless are continually advancing in knowledge and moral excellence, becoming more and more like Him in whom they live and before whom they wait, to fulfil as on wings of light his high behests. And the redeemed of the human family will be made "like unto the angels." A momentous and delightful change will take place as to their condition when they shall enter into the joy of their Lord ; when, released from the clog of a gross and animal body in which their minds were continually fettered and baffled in their noblest efforts after intellectual attainment by reason of the weakness and weariness of the flesh, they shall in its stead be possessed of a corporeity which shall with unflagging ardour accompany them,—and not merely accompany their minds, but by their own exquisite perceptions and diversified powers eminently assist them ; no longer being subject to those rude and lawless passions by which reason is now oft-times subverted and the individual is hurried into a course disapproved by his sober judgment, but ever possessing a common interest with the mind, knowing no separate interests, and therefore in strict propriety designated a spiritual body.

We cannot say determinately, whether any or what medium of perception and intercourse in regard to an external world the saints may possess

in the intermediate state ; but doubtless, when they arrive at this advanced stage of their being in which we now contemplate them, their intellectual nature will receive such an accession of light and strength as we cannot now conceive of. Hereby they will be brought into a fitting state for association with those brighter intelligences, the unfallen angels ; to whom for ages have been gradually unfolded the mysteries of the Divine will, the extent and grandeur of the Divine empire, and the glories of the Divine character.

Not merely however will there be a resemblance between the inhabitants of heaven as regards their intellectual capacities, but likewise as regards their moral nature or dispositions. All will be benevolent, humble, holy. The angels who kept not their first estate were banished for ever from heaven, and are reserved in chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Henceforth “there shall enter into it nothing that defileth, or that worketh abomination, or that maketh a lie, but such only as are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” It will upon reflection be easily discovered how eminently conducive to perfect happiness must be the universal and unmixed existence, the continued cultivation and exercise, of these three dispositions. Some advantage would doubtless attend the separate consideration of these manifestations of character, although perhaps they

ultimately resolve themselves into one thing, the excellence and perpetuity of which is maintained at length by the Apostle in the 13th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians; namely *love*, or as there rendered charity. We need only refer the reader to the lucid and delightful exposition of this principle in the chapter alluded to ; his own prayerful meditations will supply all that is needful, to enable him to conceive, as far as that can be done amidst the discordant elements of this sinful world, of the bliss which must exist in any social community where love holds uninterrupted sway. The fellowship of the saints on earth is fraught with pleasure, notwithstanding all the imperfections charged upon the church collectively, or existing at present in its individual members. What Dr. Watts wrote with so much beauty and pathos, the church militant may sing, whilst marching along the holy way to the plains of peace :

“The men of grace have found  
Glory begun below :  
Celestial fruits on earthly ground,  
From faith and hope may grow.

The hill of Sion yields  
A thousand sacred sweets,  
Before we reach the heavenly fields,  
Or walk the golden streets.”

The imperfections alluded to admonish us however that we have “not already attained,” that this is

not our rest. They bid us advance. They charge us to "covet earnestly the best gifts," and to cultivate assiduously the purest "charity," as the means of preparation for a nobler state. And how indescribably will that nobler and perfect state surpass the present. Think of a state where grace shall be consummated in glory; a state in which there shall be an universal and transparent consistency of character and an unaffected ardour of affection, admitting of no suspicion and provoking no malevolence; a state in which the loftiest attainments shall be unstained by vanity, uneyed by envy; a state in which it shall be ours to have fellowship, unbroken and confiding fellowship, with the spirits of the just made perfect, and not merely with these, but also with an innumerable company of angels; with JESUS the mediator of the new covenant, and with Jehovah the eternal Father and approving Judge; a state to which, with all its inestimable privileges, we shall be admitted by Divine grace, not on account of our meritorious works or self-torturing penances, nor of rites however sacred administered to us by sacerdotal hands, but through the merits of "the blood of sprinkling, which speaks better things than did the blood of Abel."

## SECTION II.

*The Employments of the Inhabitants of Heaven.*

Having glanced in the previous section at the intellectual and moral character of the redeemed and of their associates in heaven, we proceed to inquire into the various modes in which the increased faculties of the former, and the holy and benevolent dispositions of both, will be continually exercised and improved. We apprehend that the principal engagements of the inhabitants of heaven, in which scope will be afforded for the exercise and consequent improvement of their various faculties, will be found to be included in these three things—retrospection,—the pursuit and communication of knowledge,—and devotion ; the latter being inseparably connected with both the former, and being sustained with fresh ardour by every other mental operation. This statement, it will be perceived, fully comports with those scriptural representations of the state of the blessed as *their home*, the inheritance of the *saints in light*, and as the *temple of Jehovah*.

Heaven is designated indeed “ the *rest* that remaineth for the people of God,” a term however which by no means implies that it will be a state of inactivity. A want of occupation is not rest. It is

a state which none but the slothful and careless can desire, and in which none can be happy. The mind is constituted for activity. It now requires that its various faculties should be kept in exercise. It preserves its elasticity and vigour when the bodily frame is wasted by disease, enfeebled by age, or, exhausted by an excessive expenditure of its vital energies, seeks to enjoy for a while “tired nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep.” How much more then would a state of inactivity be irksome hereafter, when, as we have shown, the various powers of the mind shall have received such a mighty impulse. The idea of *rest* is welcome and refreshing to the weary, and inasmuch as we are called to endure toils and sorrows of various kinds in this life, we dwell with pleasurable emotions upon the prospect of repose in our heavenly home. A diversity of feeling probably exists among believers at present in relation to heaven as a state of rest, some delighting more in the contemplation of this particular view of it than others, according to the variety of their mental temperaments and external circumstances. To rest is now, very frequently, to relinquish from necessity and with reluctance some fond pursuit; and is regarded rather as an interruption to our pleasures, than as that which is on every account to be desired. But as the inhabitants of heaven will be incapable of fatigue, they will not need even the

most temporary cessation from their employ. “The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

We shall notice first the exercise of the faculties of heaven’s inhabitants in the work of *retrospection*. That the redeemed will have in the future state a most vivid and deep impression of past events, and especially of those relating to their religious experience in the present life, and remember with livelier praise, on every successive review, the way which the Lord their God had led them during their sojourn in the wilderness, there can be no doubt: nor is it less likely that these circumstances will frequently form the theme of their mutual communications. How much there is in the economy of Divine providence which now appears inscrutably mysterious; how much in the individual experience of some of the faithful, which now seems to them inexpressibly dark and painful.

“God moves in a mysterious way  
 His wonders to perform;  
 He plants his footsteps in the sea  
 And rides upon the storm.  
 Deep in unfathomable mines  
 Of never-failing skill,  
 He treasures up his bright designs,  
 And works his sovereign will.”

What wonders will burst upon the mind of the newly arrived inhabitant of heaven, whose path on earth has been thus intricate, when, as he reviews the past, he beholds one mystery after another fully unravelled ; and with what delight and gratitude, ever growing with his knowledge in these matters, will he then ascribe to God praises in the highest, confessing “ He hath done all things well.” This retrospect however will not be the solitary work of memory or personal reflection, but will be aided by the suggestions of those who were parties to the various scenes alluded to, and whose agency, though unseen, was employed in some way about them.

We are here led to two interesting topics which we must briefly notice, namely, the mutual recognition which will take place amongst those of the redeemed who have known and loved each other in the present world, and the medium of their intercourse or communion, not merely between themselves, but also between them and the other orders of holy beings who shall inhabit the Heavenly world.

There is something very gratifying in the idea that the friendships which Christians may form with each other in this world will be perpetuated in heaven ; and in the hope of meeting again, and of dwelling in a perfect state for ever with, those once dear to us as our own souls, who now sleep in

Jesus. However some may affect to ridicule these anticipations as weak or visionary, we apprehend there is good reason for indulging in them. David consoled himself thus, when supplication for the life of his child could no longer be offered, the Divine will having been manifested in its removal, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."<sup>4</sup> The Apostle Paul likewise exhorted believers to comfort one another under their bereavements with the assurance that the separations from their number occasioned by death should not be eternal, but that as surely as that Jesus died and rose again, should their departed friends be raised from the dust, and with themselves dwell in the presence of their Lord for ever.<sup>5</sup> There could be little room for consolation in either of these cases, except on the admission that the two passages imply the fact, that the bereaved parties would be able to identify and recognize in a future state of happiness those over whose frail and inanimate remains they yet wept.

With regard to the medium of communication between the inhabitants of heaven, we can only assure ourselves that it will not be interrupted by any of those obstacles, or imperfections or diversities which prevent a full and intelligible intercourse between the members of the human family in this

<sup>4</sup> 2 Sam. xii. 23.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Thes. iv. 13.—18.

world. The author of a work entitled "Physical Theory of Another Life," says in reference to this subject, "There are two suppositions, either of which may with some reason be entertained, relative to the means of communication in a higher economy." They are thus stated:

1. "That in the stead of a system of signs adapted, as all our signs are, primarily to sensible objects, and derived from the material world, and transferred by figure to things abstract and intellectual, there should be constructed a system primarily adapted to things abstract and intellectual, and drawn from the world of mind, and therefore strictly proper to notions of this class, and neither more nor fewer nor other than those notions are; nor in any such way convertible as to give rise to ambiguities of expression and confusions of thought. Such a medium of communion, it is manifest, being the mind's own creature and its commensurate power, would in its applications, both as an engine of cogitation and as a means of communication, transcend the most perfect of our mundane languages, as far as any one of our languages transcends the mute signs and awkward grimaces resorted to by men not understanding each other's tongue."

2. "The second supposition that offers itself in relation to the communion of minds is this, namely

\* Physical Theory, p. 106—109.

that the method of expression by arbitrary signs should be altogether superseded, and that in the place of it the mind should be endowed with a power of communication, by a direct and plenary conveyance of its own state, at any moment, to other minds; as if the veil of personal consciousness might at pleasure be drawn aside, and the entire intellectual being could spread itself out to view. ‘If there are tongues,’ says the Apostle, ‘they shall fail;’ and it may be intended, not merely that the various languages of earth shall be exchanged for the one language of heaven, but rather that language itself, or the use of arbitrary symbols, shall give place to the conveyance of thought, in its native state, from mind to mind.”

In whatever way the inhabitants of heaven may commune with each other, there can be little room for doubt that amongst the first of those subjects which shall engage their attention, will be the history of events in a previous state in which their own interests had been deeply involved, or upon which they had looked with an anxious and inquiring gaze. When the faithful from all quarters of the globe and of every era in its history shall meet together,—the believer of these latter days meeting the patriarchal saints and truthful seers of the Old Testament, or the Evangelists and Apostles of the newer economy, the converts to the Saviour gathered through the agency of Christian missions

from dark continental wastes or barren sea-girt islands, meeting for the first time those who had loved and supported the noble enterprize, and friend meeting the long absent friend with whom he had often taken sweet counsel here, and had gone cheerfully to the house of God,—they will doubtless afford mutual aid in the pursuit of this subject; each communicating to the other some new and important fact relative to the circumstances which he may be reviewing, or throwing light upon some of the ways of Divine Providence or some principle of the Divine government before imperfectly understood. And must we not add to these facilities that further light which will be afforded them in this interesting retrospect by their heavenly Father, either immediately, or perhaps through those very angels who as his “ministering spirits” had been “sent forth to minister to them as heirs of salvation” whilst they yet sojourned in this vale of tears.

“That heaven to which Immanuel is the living way, on whose earthward entrance atoning blood is sprinkled, on whose many mansions and amaranth crowns are the symbols which connect them with Calvary, and amidst all whose countless joys the river of deepest pleasure is the love of Jesus; this is the only heaven to which the believer expects an entrance, and is the one of which

his intensest longings say, “Would God that I were there!”

But even in this purchased possession there are ingredients of delight of an origin more personal to the believer himself,—details of special blessedness, for the germ of which he must go back to his own earthly history: and just as the sweetest surprisals here below are those in which some effort of benevolence long by-gone reverts upon you in its happy results . . . . . so the sweetest surprisals of Eternity will be similar resurrections of the works of time. When the disciple has forgotten the labour of love, he will be reminded of it in the rich reward: and though he never thought any more of the cup of cold water which he gave, or the word in season which he spake in Jesus' name, though he made no memorandum of the visits of mercy which he paid, or the asylums which he found for the orphan and the outcast, it seems that they are registered in the book of remembrance, and will all be read by their happy author in the reviving light of glory.<sup>7</sup> To find the marvellous results which have accrued from feeble means, to encounter higher in salvation than yourself those of whose salvation you scarcely ever hoped to hear, and learn that an entreaty or prayer or forgotten effort of your own had a divine bearing on the joyful consummation; to find the

<sup>7</sup> Dan. xii. 3; Matt. xxv. 34—40; x. 42.

prosperous fruit already growing on the shores of Eternity from seeds which you scattered on the streams of time,—with what discoveries of unexpected delight it will variegate the joys of the purchased possession, and with what accessions of adoration and praise it will augment the exceeding weight of glory!"\*

We observe further, that the ennobled faculties of the inhabitants of heaven will doubtless be employed in the unwearied and successful pursuit of knowledge. And with what transcendant advantages will their intellectual efforts be aided then, as compared with the advantages possessed in the present life. The whole range of subjects, mental, moral, natural, and divine, upon which finite intelligences can employ and expend their powers, will be spread out before them. They will come to the investigation of these varied subjects with all their past impressions and experience, and soon will the light of perfect and eternal day expose whatever of an erroneous nature they had heretofore held, as well as exhibit every subject in a multitude of bearings and relations before unthought of.

An author previously quoted, in a chapter on the connexion of science with a future state, enumerates the following as amongst those sciences which will be recognized and prosecuted in a future

\* "Life in Earnest," by Rev. J. Hamilton.

world—arithmetic, mathematics, astronomy, natural philosophy, anatomy and physiology, and history; and refers to each of these subjects at some length in illustration of his general position, “that science must be considered as having a relation to a future world.” The same author has likewise the following remark, among various others, in reference to the manner in which the redeemed may have information communicated to them respecting the structure, the inhabitants, and the history of other worlds.

“Perhaps it may not be beyond the bounds of probability to suppose, that at certain seasons, during a grand convocation of the redeemed, with Jesus their exalted Head president among them, that glorious personage may impart knowledge to them of the most exalted kind, direct their views to some bright manifestations of Deity, and deliver most interesting lectures on the works and ways of God. This would be quite accordant with his office as the ‘Mediator between God and Man,’ and to his character as the ‘Messenger of Jehovah,’ and the ‘Revealer’ of the Divine dispensations.”<sup>9</sup>

The writer of the above regards this method of instruction in the heavenly world as “directly intimated, though in metaphorical language,” in Rev. vii. 17: “The Lamb who is in the midst of

<sup>9</sup> Philosophy of a Future State, p. 306—308.

the Throne shall feed them, and lead them to fountains of living water :" and even so far anticipates these pleasurable occasions, as to give us a specimen of the manner in which we may suppose the Saviour to descend, for the instruction of the redeemed, upon the history of distant worlds.

We are warranted, from the strain of earnest piety which pervades the whole of the work alluded to, to assure those of our readers who may at present be unacquainted with it, that its respected author is no "undevout astronomer," although many, from being less accustomed to philosophical pursuits than himself, or from a habit of viewing science with jealousy as a presumptuous rival of revelation, rather than with complacency as its handmaid, may be disposed to imagine that he has in some instances ventured a little too far. It appears from a foot note, which we subjoin, and in which the opinions above quoted are sustained by the additional judgment of Dr. Watts, that our author was himself apprehensive some persons would be startled by his conjectures. The note is as follows.

"I hope none of my readers will consider the supposition of the Redeemer occasionally delivering lectures on divine subjects to an assembly of his saints, as either improbable, extravagant, or romantic. Since writing the above, I find that the pious and philosophic *Dr. I. Watts* entertained a similar opinion. In his sermon, "On the happiness of separate spirits," when describing the employments of the

upper world, he thus expresses his sentiments on this topic :—  
 ‘Perhaps you will suppose there is no such service as hearing sermons, that there is no attendance upon the word of God there. But are we sure there are no such entertainments? Are there no lectures of Divine wisdom and grace given to the younger spirits there, by spirits of a more exalted station? Or, may not our Lord Jesus Christ himself be the everlasting teacher of his Church? May he not at solemn seasons summon all heaven to hear him publish some new and surprising discoveries which have never yet been made known to the ages of nature or of grace, and are reserved to entertain the attention, and to exalt the pleasure, of spirits advanced to glory? Must we learn all by the mere contemplation of Christ’s person? Does he never make use of speech to the instruction and joy of saints above? Or, it may be that our blessed Lord (even as he is man) has some noble and unknown way of communicating a long discourse, or a long train of ideas and discoveries, to millions of blessed spirits at once, without the formalities of voice and language, and at some peculiar seasons he may thus instruct and delight his saints in heaven.’<sup>1</sup>

That the enlarged faculties of the redeemed will be employed with ever-growing delight in exploring the works of God, in learning the great principles of his moral government, and in contemplating the mysteries of human redemption and of Divine providence, there can be no doubt whatever. Some of these things we are told “the angels, desire to look into.” And shall not desires, —the purest and loftiest that can be entertained, whether indulged by redeemed and holy men or

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy of a Future State*, p. 315.

by those higher and unfallen intelligences,—to gather fresh illustrations of the Divine wisdom, power, rectitude, and benevolence, be fully gratified? For what purpose will the faculties of the former be so wonderfully expanded and strengthened, if facilities will not be afforded for their exercise and endowment? But these facilities will be afforded; and though after the resurrection the redeemed may have eternally one local habitation only, as we have before attempted to shew, yet will they be surrounded with objects which for a boundless duration will serve to employ all their faculties. Not being “eternally chained down to a small corner of creation,” but dwelling “before the throne of God and serving him day and night in his temple,” in that world respecting the position and magnitude of which we have attempted to form some idea, however faint and feeble that idea may be, they will have an opportunity of viewing the extent and magnificence of the Divine empire in regions too vast and distant for our present conceptions; and will have continually exhibited before them in ten thousand varied manifestations the Divine glories. In the enjoyment of such faculties and opportunities for their exercise,

“ There may I find a *settled rest*,  
 While others go and come;  
 No more a stranger or a guest,  
 But like a child, *at home*.”

We have still one point to notice respecting the manner in which the inhabitants of heaven with all their powers will be employed,—it is in celebrating the praises of God. We have already intimated that every other engagement in the heavenly world will conduce in an eminent degree to the quickening and sustaining the devotions of its inhabitants. As there will be no sense of want felt among them, we are not accustomed to contemplate them in the attitude of prayer, but in that of constant praise, which is quite accordant with scriptural representations. They are represented not as kneeling but as standing before the throne, clothed with white robes, the emblems of purity; and as having palms in their hands, the emblems of victory, being freed from sin and having finally overcome the world. Hence they sing a new song. The engagements of heaven, however diversified, all lead to praise.

“Pursuits are various here, suiting all tastes,  
Though holy all, and glorifying God.

None idle here: look where thou wilt, they all  
Are active, all engaged in meet pursuit;  
Not happy else. Hence is it that the song  
Of heaven is ever new; for daily thus,  
And nightly, new discoveries are made  
Of God’s unbounded wisdom, power, and love,  
Which give the understanding larger room,  
And swell the hymn with ever-growing praise.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> “Course of Time,” Book vi.

The writer of the above lines was called from earth soon after he had penned them, and while the bloom of youthful manhood was yet upon his cheek, to join and to enjoy, so far as the spirit in its separate state can do so, the nobler society, pursuits, and bliss of heaven. Ere the writer of these pages shall have attained even his years, it may be his privilege to follow him to the promised inheritance. And surely no idea in relation to the future, next to that of enjoying the presence and favour of God and Christ for ever, can be more animating to the believer, than the idea of meeting with such spirits, and of uniting with them and the entire multitude of the redeemed in their glorious and eternal anthem.

“Harp! lift thy voice on high! shout, angels, shout!  
 And loudest, ye redeemed! Glory to God,  
 And to the Lamb who bought us with his blood  
 From every kindred, nation, people, tongue;  
 And washed, and sanctified, and saved our souls;  
 And gave us robes of linen pure, and crowns  
 Of life, and made us kings and priests to God.  
 Shout back to ancient Time! Sing loud, and wave  
 Your palms of triumph! Sing, where is thy sting  
 O Death! where is thy victory, O Grave!  
 Thanks be to God, eternal thanks, who gave  
 Us victory thro’ Jesus Christ our Lord.  
 Harp! lift thy voice on high! shout, angels, shout!  
 And loudest, ye redeemed! Glory to God,  
 And to the Lamb, all glory and all praise,  
 All glory and all praise, at morn and even,

That come and go eternally, and find  
 Us happy still, and Thee for ever blest!  
 Glory to God and to the Lamb. Amen.  
 For ever, and for evermore. Amen."<sup>3</sup>

## SECTION III.

*The Manifestations of the Divine Presence and favour enjoyed by the Inhabitants of Heaven.*

We now come to speak of those remaining elements in the future happiness of the saints to which allusion has been made, namely, their free and endless communion with God and Christ, and the blissful sense of security which they enjoy as the result of unclouded manifestations of Divine favour towards them. This element in the blessedness of heaven, is near akin to that joy which is felt by the believer in this world, when the Divine Spirit bears witness with his own spirit that he is a child of God ; and when, realizing the privilege as a present fact, he can approach the throne of grace, crying "Abba! Father." The difference between his joy and that of heaven is in the measure, not in the kind of it ; in its duration, not in its essence. Now he has the foretaste, hereafter he will enjoy the fulness. Here, owing to the weakness of his faith and other circumstances, his joy is only

<sup>3</sup> "Course of Time," B, vi. p 191.

occasional and temporary ; there it is uninterrupted "for evermore." Communion with the Divine Being is the most noble and delightful, as well as most befitting employment of a rational creature. Now it is subject to numerous and painful distractions from things perishable and polluted ; but hereafter every impediment to free and blissful fellowship with the Father of our spirits, will be absent and forgotten.

But how will the Divine Being manifest his presence to his saints in heaven ? "God is a spirit." He is "the King eternal, immortal, and invisible." Behold "the heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him." He fills immensity. His all-powerful agency is everywhere felt and acknowledged. With such views of the Divine Being, what are we to understand by those portions of the sacred word which refer to the beatific vision of the saints, or their seeing God, as constituting one grand element in their blessedness ? "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall *see him as he is.*" "They shall *see his face*, and his name shall be in their foreheads." "As for me I shall *behold thy face* in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake in *thy likeness.*" It may be answered, that we shall see the glorified person of the Saviour, who is the

visible representative of the invisible God, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. This is true, but is it sufficient? does it meet the difficulty? will it satisfy lawful curiosity, or are we warranted in entertaining the idea that there will be some further and special manifestation of Deity, or lasting symbol of the Divine presence? Although the person of the only mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, will be eternally present, and be recognized and adored as "the Lamb, once slain," yet the mediatorial administration will cease. "He shall deliver up the kingdom unto the Father," and God as God, Deity in the mysterious tri-unity of its existence, will reign and "be all in all." The question again recurs, Will there be any special manifestation of the Divine Majesty in heaven; any symbol of Deity occupying as such "the throne" of universal empire? The Divine Being has on several occasions afforded a sensible manifestation of his presence and glory in this world, and why should we doubt respecting his making some brighter and continual manifestation of his presence in heaven, by some symbol which (in addition to their spiritual communion with him) shall constantly excite devout reverence and humility among all the shining ranks? The Lord God is said to give them light; and in the passage relating to the martyrdom of Stephen, quoted in a

previous part of this volume, the martyr is said to have seen "the glory of God,"—by which we understand some resplendent local manifestation of Him,—“and Jesus standing on the right-hand of God.” “It is (says Dr. Bates) consistent with the Divine immensity, to be differently present in some places. The essential presence of God is the same every where; the *influxive declarative* presence of God is special, and otherwise in one place than in another.” We shall conclude our remarks upon this most difficult yet interesting topic, with an extract from a treatise on “the blessedness of the righteous,” by that profound divine, the celebrated John Howe. The text of his discourse is Psalm xvii., 15, which we have already quoted in this section, “As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness.” He says “The object of this vision, the face of God or his exhibited glory, is two-fold:—1. Sensible, such as shall incur and gratify (after the resurrection) the bodily eye.—2. Intellectual, or intelligible; that spiritual glory that only comes under the view and contemplation of the glorified mind.

“1. A sensible glory (to begin with what is lower) is fitly in our way to be taken notice of, and may well be comprehended (as its less principal intendment) within the significancy of the expres-

‘Four Last Things.’’ Sermon on Psalm xvi. 11.

sion ; the face of God. So indeed it doth evidently signify, Exod. xxxiii. 11. And if we look to the notation of the word, and its frequent use as applied to God, it may commodiously enough, and will often, be found to signify, in a larger and more extended sense, any aspect or appearance of God. And though it may be understood (ver. 23 of that chapter) to signify an overcoming spiritual glory, as the principal thing there intended, such as no soul dwelling in flesh could behold, without rending the veil, and breaking all to pieces ; yet even there also, may such a degree of sensible glory be secondarily intended, as it was not consistent with a state of mortality to be able to bear. And supposing the other expression, ‘thy likeness,’ to signify, in any part, the *objective* glory saints are to behold ; it is very capable of being extended so far, as to take in a *sensible* appearance of glory also, which it doth in these words,<sup>5</sup> ‘The similitude of the Lord shall he behold :’ yet even that glory also was transformative and impressive of itself : Moses so long conversed with it, till he became incapable, for the present, of converse with men, as you know the story relates.

Such a glory as this, though it belong not to the being of God, yet it may be some umbrage of him, a more shadowy representation, as a man’s garments are of the man, which is the allusion in that of the

<sup>5</sup> Numb. xii. 8. Ezek. i. 28. Exod. xxxiv. xxxv. &c.

Psalmist,' 'Thou art clothed with majesty and honour: Thou coverest thyself with *light* as with a garment.' And inasmuch as that spiritual body (the house not made with hands,) wherewith the blessed are to be clothed upon must then be understood to have its proper sensitive powers and organs refined to that degree, as may be agreeable to a state of glory; so must these have their suitable objects to converse with. A faculty without an object is not possible in nature, and is altogether inconsistent with a state of blessedness. The bodies of saints will be raised in glory,<sup>8</sup> fashioned like Christ's glorious body;<sup>9</sup> must bear the image of the heavenly; and this will con-naturalize them to a region of glory, render a surrounding sensible glory necessary and natural to them, their own element: they will, as it were, not be able to live but amidst such a glory. Place is conservative of the body placed in it, by its suitableness there. Indeed every created being (inasmuch as it is not self-sufficient, and is obliged to fetch in continual refreshings from without) must always have somewhat suitable to itself to converse with, or it presently languishes. By such a harmony of actives and passives the world consists and holds together. The least defect thereof, then, is least of all supposable in the state of

<sup>8</sup> Psalm civ. 1, 2.

<sup>9</sup> 2 Cor. v. 1.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 43.

<sup>9</sup> Phil. iii. 21.

blessedness. The rays of such a glory have often shone down into this lower world. Such a glory we know shewed itself upon the Mount Sinai; afterwards often about the tabernacle, and in the temple: such a glory appeared at our Saviour's birth, baptism, and transfiguration, and will do at his expected appearance; which leaves it no unimaginable thing to us, and shews how facile it is to God to (do that which will then be, in some sort necessary) create a glory meet for the entertainment and gratification of any such faculty, as he shall then continue in being. But,

" 2. The intellectual glory, that which perfected spirits shall eternally please themselves to behold, calls for our more especial consideration.<sup>1</sup> This is the glory that excelleth, hyperbolical glory, as that expression imports; such, as in comparison whereof the other is said to be no glory: as the Apostle speaks, comparing the glory of the legal with that of the evangelical dispensation; where the former was, we must remember, chiefly a sensible glory, the glory that shone upon Mount Sinai; the latter a purely spiritual glory: and surely, if the mere preludes of this glory, the *primordia*, the *beginnings* of it, the glory—yet shining but through a glass, (as he there also speaks of this glory), were so hyperbolically glorious, what will it be in its

<sup>1</sup> ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης. 2 Cor. iii. 10.

highest exaltation, in its perfected state?" The Apostle cannot speak of that, but with hyperbole upon hyperbole in the next chapter. As though he would heap up words as high as heaven to reach it, and give a just account of it. Things are as their next originals. This glory more immediately rays forth from God, and more nearly represents him. 'Tis his more genuine production. He is styled the Father of glory:<sup>3</sup> every thing that is glorious is some way like him, and bears his image. But he is as well the Father of spirits<sup>4</sup> as the Father of glory; and that glory which is purely spiritual, hath most in it of his nature and image: as beams but in the next descent from the body of the sun. This is his unvailed face, and emphatically, the divine likeness. Again, things are as the faculties which they are to exercise and satisfy; this glory must exercise and satisfy the noblest faculty, of the most noble and excellent creature. Intellectual nature, in the highest improvement 'tis capable of in a creature, must here be gratified to the uttermost; the most enlarged contemplative power of an immortal spirit finds that wherein it terminates here, with a most contentful acquiescence."<sup>5</sup>

Such then will be the manifestations of Deity in

<sup>3</sup> Καθ' ἡπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν, 2 Cor. iv. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. i. 17.      <sup>5</sup> Heb. xii.

<sup>6</sup> Howe's Works. (*Bohn's Edition*, 1844) p. 198-9.

the heavenly world ; such the communion of the saints with God their Father, and with Christ the Head and Husband of the Church. And what a blissful sense of security will such fellowship inspire! *On earth* the believer can feel that in God he has an all-sufficient and soul-satisfying portion. His language is, “ Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon the earth I desire beside thee.” In *this state* of sinfulness and mortality he says, “ In thy favour is life, and thy lovingkindness is better than life.” “ Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” What then must be the raptures of the redeemed in *that state* where every vestige of sin and mortality shall be done away, “ and there shall be no more curse,” “ neither sorrow and crying,” but he who will make all things new shall wipe away all tears from all faces. What perfect peace and security must be theirs, whose souls thus rest in God as their final portion, and who are thus upheld and guarded by illimitable and Almighty love !

## SECTION IV.

*The different degrees of Glory among the Saints in Heaven.*

That there will in heaven be a difference in the capacities of the saints, for the enjoyment of intellectual and moral pleasures, is a notion which, although some may dispute, we apprehend few will venture to contradict. Each one of the redeemed will feel, and acknowledge with profound humility, that his salvation from first to last is the effect of the sovereign, efficacious, and undeserved favour of God through Christ Jesus:<sup>1</sup> and the universal prevalence of this sentiment will for ever forbid the entrance of pride on the one hand, or envy on the other, amongst the ranks of the blessed, however great the diversity that may exist between them.

“When the soul leaves the body it will retain the consciousness of whatever passed within it while here upon the earth. It carries along with it into the future world, the ideas, the knowledge,

<sup>1</sup> The author has heard many times related an observation made by the late Rev. Charles Simeon, in reference to heaven. He was accustomed to say, “There are three things which will greatly excite my wonder when I get to heaven: first, That many will probably be absent whom I hope to meet there. Secondly, that many will be there whom I never expected to meet in that blessed world. But most of all I shall wonder that through Divine grace I am there myself.”

the habits, which it possessed here. And so it takes also good and evil from this life into the next as its own property, and there receives the fruit of it. It is therefore certain that a part of the heavenly blessedness will consist in the consciousness and recollection of the good enjoyed and performed in the foregoing life, and in that cheerfulness and peace of mind which will proceed from the thought of this. As to the wicked, the case will be reversed. This, now, is one of the *natural* good consequences or rewards of virtue and piety; and the opposite is one of the natural evil consequences or punishments of sin.

"From what has now been said it follows of course that there will be *a difference of degree* (*diversitas graduum*) in the happiness of saints in heaven. The happiness of all will be equally eternal, but not equally intense. The more good actions, such as are acceptable in the sight of God, one has performed, the nobler his virtues were, the greater the difficulties and hindrances which he had to overcome, the greater will be his reward. That this should be otherwise, neither the goodness nor justice of God permit us to believe. Thus, for example, two men, one of whom had devoted his whole life to virtue and piety, while the other had put off reflection to a late period, and then first renounced his former sins, could not possibly be equal to each other in reward. In short, the

happiness of each individual will be exactly apportioned to his susceptibility of happiness. Great and various as may be his capacity or susceptibility for the enjoyment of happiness, just so great and various will his happiness certainly be hereafter. The very different talents, powers, and knowledge of men, and the use they have made of them, also make a great difference as to the capacity for happiness.”<sup>2</sup>

“All this,” adds the writer of the passages just quoted, “is perfectly accordant with the Christian doctrine;” in proof of which he cites the parable of the talents, (Matt. xxv. 14. seq.) and of the ten pieces of money, (Luke xix. 16—19.) also 2 Cor. ix. 6, ‘He who soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he who soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.’ Compared with Gal. vi. 7; 1 Cor. iii. 8, ‘Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour;’ and Rom. ii. 10. ‘To him who worketh good, glory, honour, and peace will be given, to the Jew first,’ (since from his greater knowledge he could do more good,) and also to the Greek, (or Gentile,) in opposition to the punishment spoken of ver. 9. . .

Should the reader deem further illustration of this point necessary, we think the following will prove acceptable and satisfactory. The remarks

<sup>2</sup> Lectures on Christian Theology, by G. C. Knapp, D.D. translated by Dr. Woods, sect. clx. 2.

are an exposition of the phrase “*his own reward*” in 1 Cor. iii. 8, above referred to.<sup>3</sup>

“*His own reward.*” His fit or proper ( $\tauὸν ἰδίον$ ) reward; that which pertains to him, or which shall be a proper expression of the character and value of his labour. The word *reward* ( $μισθὸν$ ) denotes properly that which is given by contract for service rendered, an equivalent in value for services or for kindness. In the scriptures it denotes pay, wages, recompence given to day-labourers, to soldiers, &c. It is applied often, as here, to the retribution which God will make to men in the day of judgment; and is applied to the *favours* which he will then bestow on them, or to the *punishment* which he will inflict as the reward of their deeds. Instances of the former sense occur in Matt. v. 12; vi.; Luke vi. 23, 35; Rev. xi. 18; of the latter in 2 Pet. ii. 13, 15.—In regard to the righteous, it does not imply *merit*, or that they deserve heaven; but it means that God will render to them that which, according to the terms of his new covenant, he has promised, and which shall be a fit expression of his acceptance of their services. It is *proper*, according to these arrangements, that they should be blessed in heaven. It would *not* be proper that they should be cast down to hell. Their original and their sole *title* to eternal life is the grace of God through Jesus Christ; the

<sup>3</sup> ἔκαστος δὲ τὸν ἰδίον μισθὸν λήψεται κατὰ τὸν ἰδίον κόπον.

*measure or amount* of the favours bestowed on them there, shall be according to the services which they render on earth. A parent may resolve to divide his estate among his sons, and their title to *any* thing may be derived from his mere favour; but he may determine that it shall be divided according to their expressions of attachment, and to their obedience to him.\*

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If the views of the heavenly state advanced in this chapter be in accordance with the scriptures of truth, ought they not to awaken deep reflection in the minds of the careless and impenitent, who are living in the indulgence of divers lusts, and in the pursuit of lying vanities,—thoughtless of God, eternity, and salvation? Reader, if you are of this number, we bid you awake to a proper consideration of the dignity of your nature as a rational and immortal being, a being destined to an interminable existence in raptures or in woe! We remind you that here there is no alternative. You cannot cease to be. Miserable comfort when death approaches, is the thought,—that possibly all will be over then, that you will sink into a state of utter lethargy, and lose all consciousness and being for ever. But no! The wicked will seek death, but shall not find it, and hope shall be far from

\* Notes on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, by Albert Barnes.

them. Then, by all that is prudent in forethought, superior in intellect, excellent in virtue, glorious in the Deity, dignified in fellowship with the supreme Mind ; by all that is resplendent in the light or sweet in the melody of heaven ; by all that is besetting in sin, and terrible in the pains and groans of the second death ; by your own sense of what is right, and your restless thirst for full and continued enjoyment ; we charge you to act as immortal men—to live above the brutes that perish—to seek salvation, and to “set your affections upon those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.” For heaven, you are at present, alike untitled and unfit. But your condition is not without hope : attend now therefore to the things which belong to your peace, before they are hid from your eyes.

If this subject calls the impenitent to reflection, it likewise calls the disciples of the Saviour to activity. They would do well to bear more constantly in mind the dignity of the position to which they are advanced, “the heirs of heaven.” What a portion, what a home, what blessedness is theirs ! Yes, *heaven is theirs.* “All things are yours,” (says the Apostle) “whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours, and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” What treasures and what a community of interests are here. The

Christian's portion is infinitely more precious and delightful than the worldling's in this life; but present good is designed only as a foretaste of the future. *His inheritance is reserved.* Here he must endure trial, toil, and conflict; hereafter he will enjoy security, rest, and peace. Brethren, "it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when first we believed."<sup>6</sup> Then let us watch and be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

Let us see to it that we rightly estimate and improve our *trials*. These are designed to wean us from worldly objects—to teach us that this polluted earth is not our rest—to subdue our pride and self-will, and to direct our contemplations towards a nobler state. "When adversity hath laid us flat on our backs, (says a quaint writer) we cannot choose but look up to heaven:" and an inspired Apostle writes, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."<sup>6</sup>

Nor let us shrink from the *toils* of the present state. "We who live" have a nobler purpose

<sup>6</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

to serve than that of living to ourselves. It is the duty and privilege of the sons of God to live "unto him that died for them and rose again." Now is the period for the employment of our energies in the Saviour's cause. Let us not sit down to calculate with how little cost and self-denial we can be saved, and be content if we can but assure ourselves, that we shall at least get into heaven at the end of our pilgrimage ; and that all will therefore be well at last. Rather let us aspire to the high distinction of resting on the Saviour's bosom, of standing *near the throne*, in company with Abraham and the faithful Patriarchs, Isaiah and the holy Prophets, with John and Stephen, with Paul and Peter, and the other Apostles ; and such men as Whitfield, Wesley, Neff, Carey, Ward, Pearse, Williams, and Yates : with many more known among the several denominations of Christians to which they belonged as men who counted "not their lives dear to them so that they might finish their course with joy and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Did we speak of *conflicts* ? Yes, these belong to the Christian on earth, and they must be vigorously and successfully engaged in, ere he can enter into his rest. He must fight the good fight of faith, or he cannot lay hold of eternal life. We are called to the conflict—let us manfully equip

ourselves for the onset. No Canaanite must be allowed to remain in the land. No sin may be cherished, or we shall be the victims of treachery—for sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. We must rout, pursue, and destroy the enemy, and not parley or spare, not even as Saul did—professedly for the service of God. Our foes are mighty and numerous, and would fain obstruct our pathway to heaven. Then let us take to ourselves the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

What mean yon palms waving before the eternal throne? They speak of victories achieved; not by angels however, but by redeemed men; men who “overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his testimony:”

“Once they were mourning here below,  
And wet their couch with tears;  
They wrestled hard, as we do now,  
With sins and doubts and fears.”

Through faith they overcame the world, “out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.”

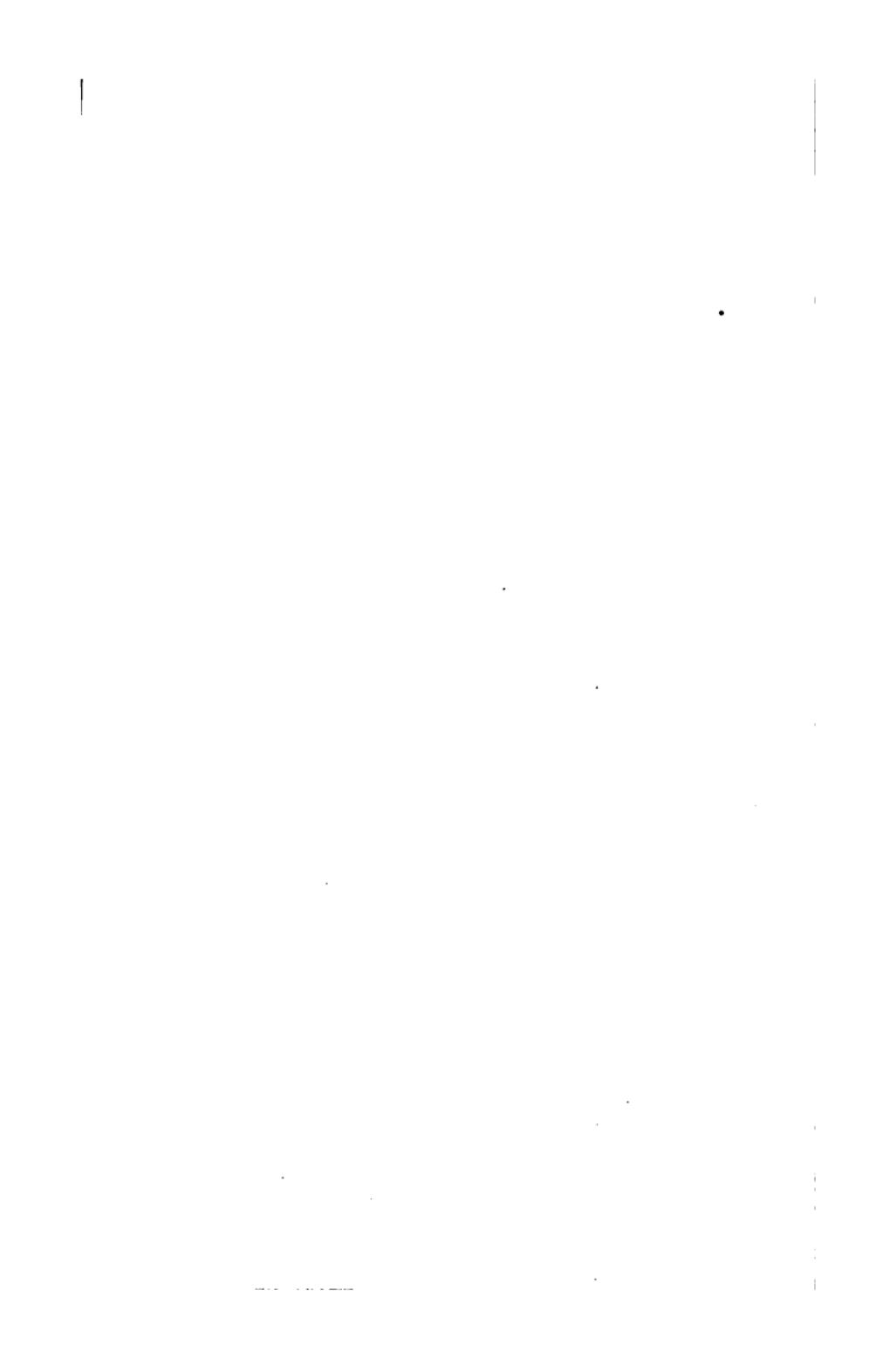
What mean yon brilliant crowns? They now adorn the brows of a Royal host, arrayed as Priests of God in purest white:—anon they are cast with becoming grace and lowliness at the Redeemer’s

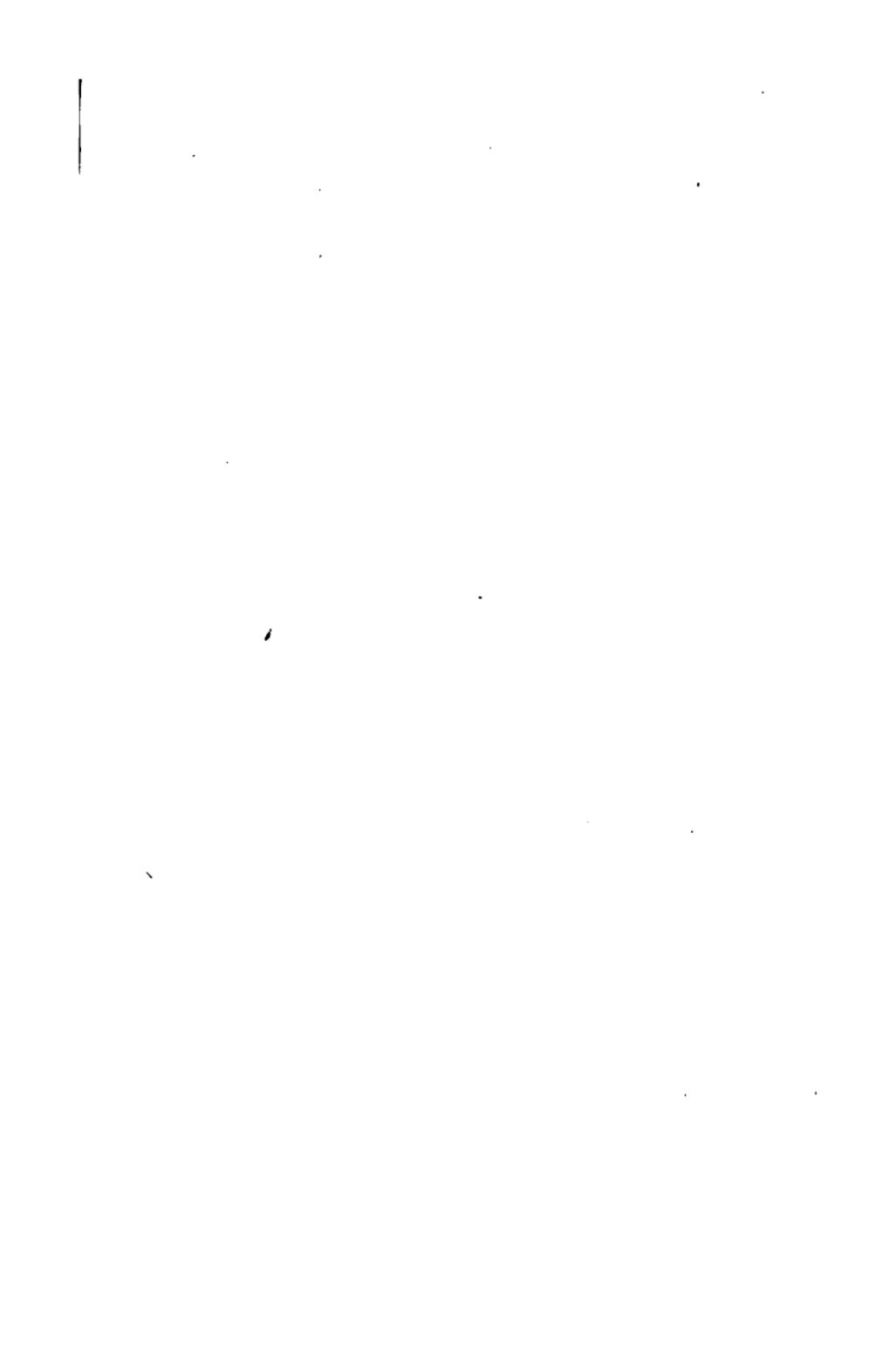
feet. They tell of fidelity. The glorious beings who wear them were once wandering, sinful men; but they were "called, and chosen," and remained "faithful;" yes, "faithful unto death." And now they possess imperishable crowns,—crowns of righteousness and life.

Then let us hold fast the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end, walk by faith, and act continually as in expectation of the period when our exalted Redeemer shall bestow similar honours upon us; and not upon us only, "but upon all them also that love his appearing."

"RETURN, O LORD; HOW LONG? O LET THY KINGDOM COME! THY DESOLATE BRIDE SAITH, COME; FOR THY SPIRIT WITHIN HER SAITH, COME; WHO TEACHETH HER THUS TO PRAY WITH GROANINGS AFTER THEE, WHICH CANNOT BE EXPRESSED: THE WHOLE CREATION SAITH, COME, WAITING TO BE DELIVERED FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION INTO THE GLORIOUS LIBERTY OF THE SONS OF GOD: THYSELF HATH SAID, SURELY I COME. AMEN. EVEN SO COME, LORD JESUS."

THE END.







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CLARK.

